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05



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It also includes a section written to help the Locoscript user to 'convert' quickly to Protext.

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Talk, talk

It's always good to see more and more of the PCW's potential actually being realised. Since its first appearance on the scene some five years ago, the PCW has been striving masterfully to shake off the shackles of its original dedicated word processor tag.

The PCW is no longer an alread, chugging nobly away in splendid isolation, confined to churning out word processed documents. And yet the

opportunities that are available are rarely made apparent when you first walk into your local computer retail outlet.

Computer salesmen don't always know an awful lot about the products they are selling; one has even been overheard telling a prospective PCW purchaser that the machine won't run anything other than LocoScript. As he propelled his by now visibly bewildered customer towards the PC section of the shop, he could be heard further consolidating his ignorance with the line "Databases

and spreadsheets are the realm of those larger, faster and altogether more attractive machines, the PCs. Would you care to come this way?"

Far from being a stay-at-home, pipe and slippers machine, the PCW is actually quite outgoing. In many instances, it acts as a kind of crossover point between the user and the outside world. We like to think, at the risk of sounding tauntingly self-congratulatory, that 8000 Plus has played more than a fleeting part in spreading the word. Take Andrew

Bibby's series of articles in which he regularly goes on-line or this month's feature on adding a 5.25 inch disc drive. We've even got the PCW exchanging drivers with those 24-pin dot matrixes, the bigger, supposedly butcher, cousins of the machine's native 9-pin printer.

The PCW is becoming an increasingly outgoing machine; it's up to you to make the most of it.

Sharon

Chauvinist dig

OASIS (Organisation Against Sexism in Software), is set to take the software industry by storm. The organisation's chief, Sandra Vogel, has been busy preparing a 'statement of intent' due for release later this year. The document comprises a series of principles by which editors of national computer magazines will strive to abide. The intent is to wipe out sexism throughout the computer world - from software design and marketing to computer magazine editorial and advertisement content. If editors of target publications endorse and stand by the statement then OASIS will have been responsible for making important structural changes in computing.

OASIS was set up almost two years ago, and now has approximately 150 members, "... roughly half of whom are male" commented Sandra Vogel. The youngest subscriber is a nine year old girl; other members vary in both age and occupation, from programmers to businesspeople alike. Each member pays the nominal fee of £3.00 per year and receives six club magazines and a recommended list of non-sexist software to name but two perks. The organisation's financial back-up comes from the subscription fee, although, as Sandra says, "150 people paying £3.00 a year doesn't cover costs", so private donations are also welcome. Asked if any major figures in the software industry had contributed financially, Sandra replied, "No. Although all donations would be gratefully received; frankly I would rather see them doing something positive to change the current situation." Publicity for the cause is on the increase. As well as

national press coverage, (including recognition in both *The Sunday Times* and *The Times Educational Supplement*) Sandra has also been interviewed on Radio Scotland's discussion programme, "Head On".

Sandra Vogel's hopes for the future are clear. "The software industry has to wake up to the fact that things are changing. The market is becoming more critical - and that doesn't just mean being anti-sexist."

If you would like to find out more about OASIS, write to them at 3 Alden Court, Stanley Road, Wimbledon, London SW19 8RD. Watch this space for news on the release of OASIS' statement of intent.

In the meantime, if you are seeking more immediate evidence of equilibrium in the sex war, you might like to invest in the International Biographical Centre's 'The World Who's Who of Women.' The publication, retailing at £75.00, has been updated for 1990, and includes entrants such as Barbara Bush and Corazon Aquino. You can contact the publishers on 0353 721091.



If you're a man and this makes you cringe, imagine what it does if you're a woman

NEWS

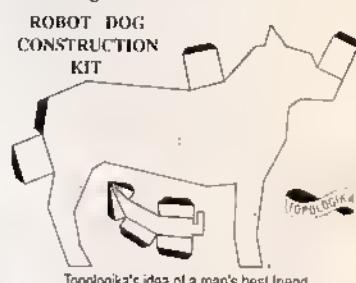
Doomed

After the text-only adventures *Countdown* and *Return to Doom* you might have hoped that Topologika would produce something a little more lighthearted as far as actual titles are concerned - not so.

The latest offering from the adventurers is the cheerfully named *Last Days of Doom*, the final part of the Doom Trilogy. The aim of the game is simple - to save the dying planet Doom from expiry. Help (or hindrance) is at hand in the form of the computerised canine from 'Return to Doom' (imaginatively called 'robot dog'). Beware though, the pesky robot renegades from the other parts of the Doom trilogy have

hitched a ride on the programmer's inspiration and are still lurking around trying to obstruct the true course of planet saving.

The Last Days of Doom is available from Topologika, P.O Box 39, Stilton, Peterborough PE7 3RL, priced £19.95. You also get a tree copy of *Hezarin* (yet another game) and a cutout and keep model of the robot dog.



Topologika's idea of a man's best friend

So, what's new then?

Margin Maker, the company who brought you two printer accessories (the popular MM3 and Maxatit) have expanded beyond the relevance of their own name. Due to the release of a broad range of new products, including devices as diverse as automatic fluid valves and garden implements (!) the company will henceforth be known as 'Simpell Solutions', and will be looking to expand yet further into the realm of 'top quality, user friendly software'.

They can also offer "advice, help and experience in the range of skills needed to turn good ideas into paying products." A complex

commitment for a Simpell organisation? Simpell Solutions can be contacted on 0784 452677.

Meanwhile, Cornix Software (see pages 18 and 19 for a review of their *Simple Accounts*) have simply changed location. All orders and enquiries should now be directed to Tavistock House, 34/36 Bromham Road, Bedford MK40 2QD. Phone 0234 219969.

Paper boon

Whoever said that computers would be responsible for the dawning of a new age - that of the paperless office - must have had a screw loose somewhere. That, or they had never visited us here at Monmouth Street.



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£19.95

This disc is packed with time-saving programs to get the best out of your PCW. Includes Address Book and Mailing Label Printer, File Sorter, Converter for text to multi-column format, Letter, Word and Sentence Counter, Dot Matrix Printer Set-Up Commands and more.

HYPERTEXT

£19.95

Regard it as a 3-dimensional text processor. Subject words used in one level are described in more detail in the lower level. Words in the lower level can be further amplified in the next level etc. Hypertext works in a similar way to the human brain by retrieving information using associative links between topics. A very powerful tool when assembling documentation and reference materials.

EXPERT SYSTEM

£19.95

An Expert System helps analyse a problem logically. With it you can build your own custom knowledge base. Builds up and maintains a database of information which is linked by a pre-defined set of rules. Each rule specifies the facts which have to be true before a conclusion can be reached. A typical expert system would ask a series of questions. Each answer given would then lead to a more detailed question until the system is ready to offer a solution to the problem.

TEXTBASE

£19.95

Textbase is designed to assemble a database from a series of previously created text (ASCII) files. Once assembled in the database the files can be searched, sorted, printed etc.

SECURITY

£19.95

Ensure that only authorised persons have access to your files. This effective system uses simple password control to gain access to your files with a key word or key phrase of up to 255 characters.

SUPASTAT

£19.95

A large collection of statistical programs and utilities designed to run under Mallard BASIC. Easy to use with full menu selection.

ADVANTAGE ENTERTAINMENT SOFTWARE

SLIDER

£9.95

A unique computer version of the mechanical sliding squares puzzle. Pictures are divided up on a grid of squares, which are then mixed up; your task is to slide them around to re-assemble the pictures.

PCW-OBAOUTHS

£9.95

A well-presented and challenging version of the well-known board game, played against the computer. Large, clearly presented board making the most of the PCW's hi-resolution graphics.

VENIADE

£9.95

A novel computer game based on the popular TV Quiz 'COUNTDOWN'. Take turns with the computer to choose 9 letters from the alphabet by stating VOWEL or CONSONANT. Make the longest word you can - the computer will do the same. Whoever has the longest word wins!

TRIVIA QUIZ

£9.95

A multi-choice game with plenty of fast-action graphics and sound, competitive scoring and a wide variety of questions. Gameplay is easy to understand and each round is short enough to maintain interest. For age 8 to adult. "Guaranteed completely trivial" - 8000 Pins.

HIGH LEVEL LANGUAGES

NEVADA COBOL COMPILER

£33.95

COBOL is an industry standard data processing language, suitable for business applications. Based on ANSI 1974 Standard COBOL, Nevada features runtime error messages, random access and sequential files and integration of assembly language using the DR MAC assembler.

NEVADA PASCAL COMPILER

£33.95

Offers floating point to 14 digits, trace facility, runtime errors, linker and assembler, 26 built-in functions, 9 built-in procedures, 15 I/O functions, random sequential and indexed file I/O functions, histogram activity analyser and access to system calls.

NEVADA FORTRAN COMPILER

£33.95

Achieves closely to the ANSI x3.9-1966 standard with some 1977 extensions. Advance features include THEN, ELSE, COPY, CHAINING and TRACE. With two-pass assembler, random I/O file, 25 general purpose subroutine/function library and runtime error reports. No linking.

MIX C COMPILER with comprehensive manual and tutorial..... £33.95

MIX C EDITOR for all your source code editing..... £19.95

MIX C ASM UTILITY & TUTORIAL SOURCE CODE EXAMPLES..... £10.95

MIX C GRAPHICS LIBRARY Ready to run graphics routines .. £10.95

HISDFT C CDMPILER Popular compiler with ED80 editor..... £24.95

HISDFT ZBASIC COMPILER The only Basic compiler for PCW .. £24.95

HISDFT MODULUS-2 COMPILER Powerful implementation..... £24.95

HISDFT PASCAL 80 Well known compiler with ED80 editor..... £24.95

HISDFT FORTH Interesting compiler with ED80 editor..... £24.95

HISDFT DEVPAK 80 V2 Complete 280 Assembler with ED80..... £44.95

But if your social conscience is beginning to prick you a little as you survey the amount of natural resources that you and your printer waste every day, then a company in Sheffield may well have the answer.

Earthwrite Cooperative Ltd were founded in 1986 by three people who had long been involved in recycling and other environmental issues. Nowadays, this flourishing business provides users of all home and business computers with a range of continuous stationery (all standard sizes catered for) made entirely of recycled waste. Earthwrite claim that their paper will withstand the most rigorous of treatment, and, says Pete Stewart, "We can confirm that by early May we will be able to supply 100gsm (grams per square metre) A4 high quality watermark continuous stationery from the Conservation range."

For prices, samples and specialist information regarding the availability and use of all types of recycled paper, write to Earthwrite Co-operative Ltd, Unit 1B, Carlisle House, 99 Carlisle Street, East Sheffield.

Making it public

Due to an increased interest in Public Domain software and the lack of PD programs written on the

PCW, the *Keith Simons Collection* was launched way back in the September of last year.

The original version comprised some 169K of material and over 25 useable programs written by Keith. Virtually all the programs were written in BASIC, useable on all PCWs and written for beginners and skilled programmers alike.

Programs included financial and scientific calculators, a full screen text editor, educational games, a trivia game, utilities and business and domestic programs, all with very full instructions and menu-driven access. A second version of the disc has now been released, adding still more programs and another 131K to the disc. As Keith comments, "All the features (and all the programs) which made the Collection so unique have been preserved in Version Two."

The 'flagship' of the new version, reports Keith, is TypeSet; this BASIC program enables text to be typed out with proportional spacing and full justification (using the best possible resolution available on the PCW dot-matrix printer) in a variety of typestyles: normal, bold, gothic and roman, to name but a few. Another program called FontEdit enables fonts to be edited or new fonts to be made.

Two COM utilities are added: a file copier and word counter. Further

new additions include three LocoMail programs, calculators and an array generating program. All programs are fully documented for the beginner.

The initial distributor of the disc is PCW-World User Group, Cotswold House, Cradley Heath, Warley, West Midlands, B64 7F. They will supply non-members with the programs for £5.45 and that includes a new 3" disc as well as the copying fee and postage and packing. For further information, talk to Gerry Austin at PCW-World on 0384 66269.

Paper pack writer

Ever noticed how continuous stationery is only ever supplied in bulk? Not ideal if you're a home computer enthusiast. Well, Sternstat is a company who are distributing through stationers and dealers nationwide a quite unique range of continuous stationery in smaller user packs. Called Impact Pro-Line, the new range consists of three different pack sizes (1000 sheets, 500 sheets or 200 sheets), four paper colours (pastel pink, blue,

yellow or your common or garden white) and two paper qualities (70 or 80 gsm).

Another real bonus, claim Sternstat, is the inclusion of continuous, sprocket-fed envelopes. They maintain that there is no real reason why users of dedicated word processors shouldn't, eventually, kiss labels goodbye forever.

So, what's the damage? Well, the prices vary - from £6.81 for a 200-sheet pack of white 70 gsm bond to £23 for 1000 sheets of white 70 gsm. The continuous envelope stationery is supplied in packs of 50 at £14.61.

If that's whetted your appetite, talk to John Wise



How's that for paper innovation?

CLUB

Mmmmm 25

For the first time in a few months we have received a communication from the M25 Club. From the look of the newsletter it would appear that they have been getting into MicroDesign II. We are informed that it was produced using that package by our old friend Gunter Wittenberg during a club demonstration session. From the contents of same it would appear that there is still a healthy amount of activity occurring as well.

Tony Brown, the Membership Secretary, reminds everyone that the name of the club derives from the fact that, "... most of us live near the M25 motorway, in west or north London. But the M25 also runs near the Dartford Tunnel and places like Leatherhead and none of us live there. We overlooked that when we adopted the M25 label."

At the recently held third AGM a new committee was elected. It's good to see that PCW stalwart Ken Ritchie is still at the helm. If you want to know more about how to join the club you should phone Tony Brown himself on 01 8413666. The

club has a wide range of experience, dealing with matters as diverse as LocoScript (1 and 2), Sage Retrieve and Stockmarket among others. All this experience will cost you a paltry £1.00 per meeting. By the way, the club also provide a file transfer service for 3 inch to 5.25 and 3.5 inch formats for no extra cost.

Jumper lead

Although we would never admit this in public, the Club News desks can be sweetened up. This was recently done to great effect when a large, soft package plopped onto the doormat. Contained in its folds was a smart red sweatshirt (size large - how did they know?) with the legend "Hereford Amstrad User Group" in yellow emblazoned over the chest. The rest of the 8000 Plus office looked into the Club News cubby hole enviously.

The Hereford Amstrad User Group (HAG) have arranged trips in the near future (to Rank Xerox for one) and the including tutorial and discussion sessions will continue. If you would like to find

out more, you should phone David Rose on (Hereford) 0432 267213.

Yorks a lummy!

A new group is on the horizon and it needs your support. Jae Campbell tells us that the Ground Floor Centre, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire now have a club which involves the PCW as well as a few other computers such as the Apple Macintosh, PC and Atari ST. The centre has access for the less physically able among our readers and holds meetings on the second and last Monday of each month. For more information please contact Jae Campbell on 0422 844991.

Notts untied

Another new club, the PCW will soon have more supporters than Oldham Athletic FC; this one is called the Retford PCW User Group (RUG??). Membership at the moment stands at 10 people and the membership fee is £10.00 per annum. We will keep you up to date with activities but for more information you should call Paul Tew on 0777 870038.

NEWS

(01 991 1666), Director of Business Development, Electronic Office Supplies, Sternstat Ltd, 24B Perivale Industrial Park, Horsenden Lane South, Perivale, Middlesex UB6 7RJ.

London calling!

Please take note: from May 6th, the London telephone number 01 prefix will change to 081. Have a look at our listing on page 59 which shows you how to automatically convert all your databased phone numbers.

Cut the sheet

In last month's Postscript, we published a letter from a reader who was wondering if there were any dust covers available which would accommodate the 9512 printer with the cut sheet feeder in place. We said that, as far as we were aware, there weren't any suppliers of such a thing. Well, just as we hoped they would, someone wrote in to tell us that, in fact, Hounslow-based Hamilton Business Systems produce a three-piece set of dust covers for the 9512, plus sheet feeder, for £13.95. The same covers for 9512 minus feeder cost £12.95, while the 8000 series three-piece sets cost £11.95. For further information, talk to Bob Hamilton at 38 Green Lane, Hounslow, London TW4 6JF on 01 577 0098. Alternatively, fax through your order on 01 572 1481.

Pssst!

Avon Business Computers' Point of Sale stock control and invoicing system not only produces daily accounts in ledger form on paper printout, it also integrates fully with Sagesoft's Popular Accounts package to update both the Sales and Nominal ledgers.

And with accounts programs



POINT OF SALE
for the
Amstrad PCW8512

60 of these available for 8000 readers; save £134!

firmly to the fore in this month's issue, ABC MD Adrian Wilkins is now prepared to offer - exclusively through the pages of 8000 Plus - sixty Point of Sales programs at £60 each inclusive of VAT and postage. This represents a reduction from £169 (plus VAT, £194.35) - a total saving of over £134. And not only do you get the program, you will also be entitled to a free 30-day support line. Not bad going, really.

For further information, talk to Adrian on 0761 70543 at Avon Business Computers, New Road, High Littleton, Bristol BS18 5JH.

The art of noise reduction

Computer equipment of all kinds generates static electricity, especially in environments where synthetic fabrics such as nylon are widely used, and if this is allowed to go unchecked, substantial charges will build up. These not only attract dust, but can, in some circumstances, lead to data corruption and equipment malfunction if discharged suddenly.

Relex anti-static tough mats, designed specifically to deal with this problem are now available from Action Computer Supplies for use under computers, printers, VDUs, keyboards and mice.

The mats are conductive and, claim their manufacturers, static charges leak away to earth via a one-megohm, 10-m cable; all you have to do is touch the mat before you touch the machine or any part of it. Action further maintains that as well as minimising static problems, the mats reduce the transmission of noise and vibration when used under printers and keyboards. (Anyone who uses the 9512's daisy wheel on a regular basis will appreciate just what a godsend that can be.)

Prices range from £11.30 to £30. For further information, call Action Computer Supplies, Abercorn Commercial Centre, Manor Farm Road, Wembley, Middlesex HA9 1WL on 0800 333 333.

Monitoring your means

Never let it be said that PCW software houses are ever backward in turning forward. The Evesham Welfare Benefits Program have just released a PCW version of their upgraded five-year-old workhorse which calculates a person's or family's entitlement to the main



He couldn't do it; can you?

means tested benefits - Family Credit, Income Support, Rent Rebate and Community Charge Benefit. You may be pleased to hear that this latest release also includes the calculation of the recently introduced Community (Poll) Charge (Tax) Transitional Relief.

The program is intended mainly for advice workers, while the handy help screens will assist those who may not be entirely familiar with the latest regulations.

So, what prompted the conversion of the program into PCW format? Say the program's organisers, "As Voluntary Organisations and Social Service Departments tend to be the main users of the program, it has been designed to run on the Amstrad PCW series of machines which often 'double up' at work as the office word processor."

The Evesham Welfare Benefits Program costs £100 (no VAT). For any further information, please call Mr Bailey at 4, Simon de Montfort Drive, Evesham, Worcs WR11 4NR on 0386 443340.

The family way

If you read last month's Genealogy feature, you will have seen that Kintech have stopped producing Personal Ancestral File, one of the best family history programs for the PCW.

The good news is that agreements have just been concluded between Bristol-based TRACS (Tony Reece Computer Services), The Church of the Latter Day Saints (the original developers of the software) and Kintech. Under these agreements, TRACS will sell and support Personal Ancestral File (PCW version) in the UK starting from mid-April.

Tony Reece commented, "The Personal Ancestral File software, being a market leader fits well into the range of computers, hardware and business software sold by TRACS."

For further details, you should contact Tony at 94 Coombe Lane, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol BS9 2AP on 0272 682321.

SNIPPETS

A real brick

Our thanks go to Mrs Ann Lisle from Tyne and Wear who sent us a rather interesting April Fools snippet from her paper. Managing Director of the official Amstrad Users Group, Eric Innes, was out having his early morning swim when eight of his staff arrived at his Sunderland home and promptly bricked up his driveway with no less than 400 bricks. It seems that Mr Innes was charged £50 as a donation to the TV Telethon fund-raising marathon for the pleasure.

One more for the Agenda

Microwriter Systems plc, manufacturers of the AgendaA (see our February review), have launched a programming language, Agenda Basic Code (ABC), for their electronic personal organiser. ABC enables professional software writers, individual users and in-house corporate programmers to produce application programs for the AgendaA. The language follows BASIC closely and existing BASIC programs can be run on the AgendaA with minimal adaptation. For more information, call Nicola Fuller of Christow Consultants Ltd on 01 495 8565. Meanwhile, please FAX any technical questions you might have to Jonathan Allen on 0271 24183.

Please, please, please

Herewith a heartfelt plea from each member of the 8000 Plus editorial staff (but especially the Editor). Can those readers who are making subscription renewals or inquiries, or who are writing in to order back issues or special offers, please address their letters or direct their telephone calls to our Somerton office, the address and telephone number of which can be found in the middle of the panel to the left of the Opening Menu.

It will make all our lives (but especially the Editor's) a whole lot easier. Thank you very much.

Gaps and deficiencies

Are you thinking of setting up a small business? Do you already run one and are you thinking of fully computerising it?

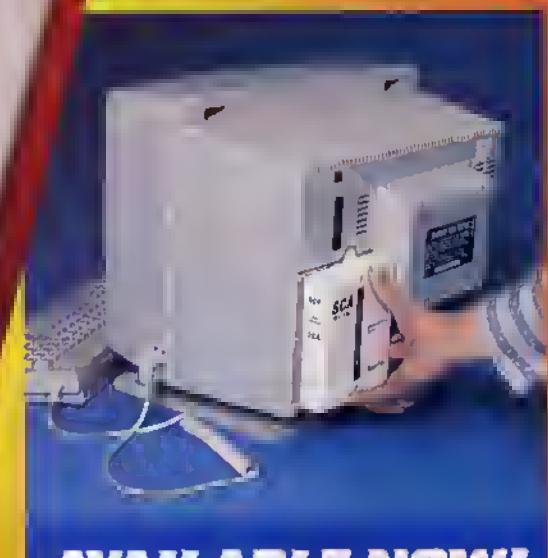
Well, the Manchester Chamber of Commerce and Industry have written a paper called 'Gaps and Deficiencies in the Computer Training market' and, off the back of this, has come a video training package. For more details call Maureen Styan on 061 236 3210.

NEED MORE MEMORY? Then plug in a RAMPAC



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DRIVING SCHOOL

It's big, it's brash and it could make your life easier. What is Tim Smith talking about? A 5.25 inch disc drive for your PCW of course

B-ware!

The new 5.25 inch is treated by the PCW in exactly the same way as a normal B: drive. 8256 owners should look at the relevant section in the PCW manual for details of twin drive machines. This means that if you already have a B: drive, you will lose the use of it. The reason is that the cables which are normally used to fit the standard B: drive are now used to accommodate the new drive.

It he price of discs is scandalous" goes up the cry. Now admittedly, the 3 inch discs which you use with the PCW do last, are hard wearing and are reliable. But cheaper magnetic media do exist. The 5.25 inch drives which were once the standard PC format (they are rapidly being superseded by the 3.5 inch variety) can cost as little as 50p each and, what's more, with the correct software, you can use them to transfer data between PCWs and PCs. The still-selling-like-hotcakes, Amstrad PC1512 and 1640 machines make use of 5.25 inch media and the bulk of other IBM clones still come with this format. Many PCW users find themselves forced to use these MSDOS (MicroSoft Disc Operating System) machines at work while carrying out other tasks at home with their chosen machine. Alternatively, many business people use PCWs but find that their accountants or clients have been carried away with PC hype. Data exchange is obviously imperative in all of these situations and because

writing out a SuperCalc 2 sheet longhand is not the most relaxing of tasks, other ways of achieving the exchange must be found. One of the quickest and easiest methods to achieve this is to fit an additional 5.25 inch drive to your PCW.

If you merely want to use your new drive as a straightforward B: drive, albeit one which uses cheaper discs, you can skip the following section and get straight on to fitting it. If, on the other hand you actually want transfer between PC and PCW then read on ...

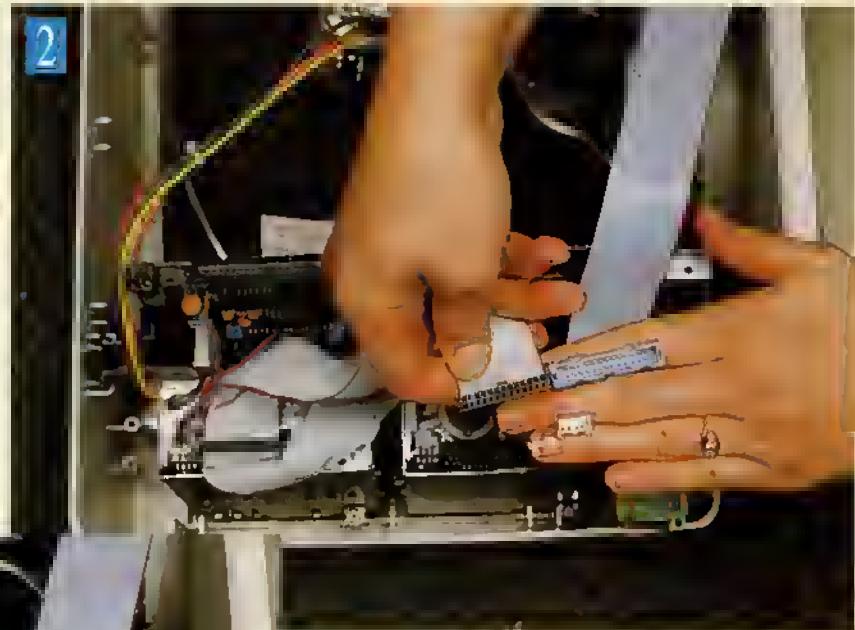
Discket detail

On the back of the new 5.25 inch drive you will notice two switches. One is the white, ON/OFF power switch while the other, metallic one, acts as a toggle between 40 track (PC) and 80 track (PCW) disc formats. When formatting a disc for use as a simple PCW B: drive, this toggle should be set to 80 track which will give you 160 tracks per disc (80 each side).

Fitting the drive

The first thing to do is unplug your PCW from the mains. Because some voltage is retained it might be a wise idea to leave the machine turned off over night. Next morning, get a blanket or rug on which to lay your PCW without scratching the screen.

There are six retaining screws on the back of your PCW 8000 series machines (don't worry 9512 owners, we have a feature planned for you next month). All you need to remove these is a long-handled cross-head (Philips screwdriver). Once these are removed, the casing will come away from the machine and you will see the inner secrets.



1 & 2

8256 owners will see a slightly different picture to the photographs shown here because they only have one drive fitted. In this case they will see two leads secured by a plastic strap, clip this with some scissors and the two leads will come free. The wide, grey ribbon cable is the information handler while the smaller white cable is the power supply. Because the 5.25 inch drive comes with a separate power supply you will not need to bother with the internal cable.

8512 owners will see that these two cables are plugged into the lower of their two drives. Disconnect both cables - now you see how easy it is to reconnect them if you decide that you need to use your PCW B: drive again in the future.

5.25 INCH DRIVE

and a storage capacity of 800k. DISCKIT is unable to format discs to 40 tracks. So when reading from or writing to a disc formatted on a PC, you must set the toggle to 40 tracks. If you don't, you'll get a nasty grinding noise and a rather unwelcome error message.

Along with the Pace drive comes a 5.25 inch disc (80 track PCW format) with software called TDOS (make a copy of this disc to 3 inch format using PIP or even Disckit as normal). The DOS stands for operating system, the T stands for Transfer. TDOS is run from the CP/M B> prompt using your new 5.25 inch B: drive and allows quick and easy transfer of files from PC to PCW disc formats and vice versa.

Lovely configure

Because the PC and PCW configure their discs in different formats, such software is essential if you want to exchange data. Instead of having to buy new cables, an interface and comms software, TDOS allows you to put a PC written disc in the new drive (setting the toggle to 40 track first) and then read or write to it from the PCW. You should bear in mind that both computers use different operating systems.

The PCW uses CP/M while PCs make use of MSDOS (or PC-DOS). The reason for this is that the two types of machine use different processor chips. This means that programs which run on one will not run on the other. Although it is possible to get an add-on card for some makes of PC which will enable them to emulate the PCW's Z80 chip, the converse is not (yet) true.

So, all you can really transfer over are ASCII files. These can be produced by Protext, LocoScript, Masterfile 8000 and

SuperCalc2 to mention just four. Equally the common PC word processors such as WordStar or WordPerfect will also produce ASCII files. There is a version of Mallard BASIC for the PC (which you have to pay for) so, theoretically at least, BASIC programs written on the PCW can be sent over to the PC. So, now get on and fit your new 5.25 inch B drive. ■

Spend, spend, spend

5.25 inch drives are available from the following suppliers:

Company	Drive & Price	Tel
Silicon City	Pace + TDOS = £134	0209 891141
West of Britain	Pace + TDOS = £121.70*	0558 823782
RSC Ltd	FD7 (own brand) = £139.00* 0923 243301	
Pinboard	TEAC FD55 FR = £95	0462 894410

(Prices with * exclude VAT).

5.25 inch discs are available from all over the place; check out the advertisements in 8000 Plus or our sister magazine PC Plus for details. If you buy in bulk (25 and over) you could find yourself paying as little as 50p a disc. As with any disc, however, it is better to go for the brand names such as Maxell, TDK and 3M.

Daisy chains

For those of you lucky enough to have two drives already, here is the ... less than good news. You do have to lose the use of your B drive. Back in 29 (February 1989) we did print a letter from a DJ Perry who mentioned that 'daisy chaining' was possible. Daisy chaining is basically fitting both drives in parallel and then toggling between them. Even using this system means that one drive has to be on and one off. Consequently you will always lose the use of at least one.



4 The next action is simplicity itself; fit the male connector to the female on the PCW's ribbon cable. Once this has been done, the most irritating element of the whole shibang takes place – putting the casing back on with the new ribbon cable sticking through the printer port. The best way to do this is to find a good charity and provide yourself with a swear box – the charity will appreciate it and you will feel less irritated.



A FRIEND INDEED

BASIC programming is an art which has been discovered by many PCW users over the years. Tim Smith looks at five ways to make it easier

BASIC NEEDS

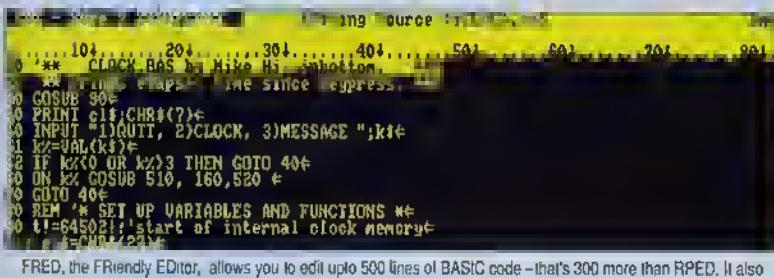
£9.95 (£5 to the RNLI) • Luxylan Software • 0726 850820

This little bundle of joy costs under a tenner and once you have cracked its, to put it politely, eccentric documentation, you will find your programming that bit more pleasant. It is a BASIC bundle for programming buffs and an element of foreknowledge is assumed. But don't let that put the non-programmers among our readers off; if you want to get into the art, this bundle could ease the learning process.

Copy cat

Basic Needs comprises five tiles which can be run under Mallard BASIC. FCMP.BAS is a utility which compares two BASIC files on screen and then gives a report on the number of inconsistencies between the two. As both program lines are printed simultaneously on screen, this is a boon when checking amended listings from originals.

BASIC editing made easy ... and cheap



FRED, the FRriendly EDitor, allows you to edit upto 500 lines of BASIC code - that's 300 more than RPED. It also makes use of LocoScript keys such as [DOC], [PAGE], [LINE] and [FIND]; what more could you want?

Name	Refs	Line Numbers
FC	0	180, 200, 220, 221, 230, 240, 360, 410
		200, 230, 240, 370, 370, 420
	1	300
	4	49, 110, 170, 280
	5	510
	2	460, 460
	6	480, 490
XPSS	5	100, 110, 110, 120, 130
ROUT	8	360, 370, 380, 380, 380, 380, 400, 430
	7	520

Look into the 'logic' of some of those type-in listings with XPSS, another of the programs to be found in Basic Needs. XPSS traces variables and chases GOTOS and GOSUBs around a program

FCPY.BAS takes over from where PIP leaves off. Firstly, you have to leave BASIC to use it and secondly, PIP will quite happily overwrite a file of the same name while copying. FCPY checks to see whether the destination file exists and, if it does, you are warned. An advantage over the BASIC copying method (usually SAVE"filename") is that FCPY lets you use 'wildcards' (*) and (?). You can also edit files as they are copied - nice addition. Finally, PRTA.BAS is a little utility which displays text files to screen or printer.

The big guns

We now come onto the meat of the matter. Two files which programmers will soon become very attached to indeed. XPSS.BAS will make checking those listings you find at the back of 8000 Plus every month far less of a grind to debug. This utility performs a trace on variables, GOTOS, GOSUBs

and other statements. If you have ever had to chase the logic of a program all over the place - seeking out variables such as \$ and t\$ by the light of a 40 watt - this program will come as manna from heaven. The listings which this program produces can be sent to screen and printer.

The real heart of the package, however, lies with FRED, the FRriendly EDitor. This program is impressively agile and versatile as file editor and program editor; it makes the PCW's bundled RPED.BAS look even more unfriendly than normal. Happily, FRED also makes use of the LocoScript keys to the right of the keyboard: [DOC], [PAGE], [LINE] and [EOL] are available for movement around a file (their [ALT] alternatives are also there to be used). For text manipulation, [CUT], [PASTE] and [FIND] are also there to be used. Just having a Find facility makes tracking variables a breeze.

FRED is able to take tiles of up to 500 lines or 15k in ASCII form; this is 300 lines more than RPED.BAS will allow you. If you decide to use bigger files you are given warning and the file is chopped, only to be made whole once again at the end of the edit. All in all, FRED is a Mallard manipulator's dream. As with all of the other files on this disc, FRED can be listed out and altered to suit your own needs. This is a privilege which can easily be abused by software pirates (that also means people who 'lend' software, which is then copied and no fee paid to the programmer, to their friends); we hope this is not the case as a great deal of work has obviously gone into the programming and the vast amount of documentation - if that's not suitable reason, remember that the lifeboat men will go short of £5.00.

Read fail

As with nearly all software which crosses the 8000 Plus reviewer's desk there are problems. The most obvious and unfortunate problem with Basic Needs is the fact that the documentation is, frankly, appalling. It comes on disc and there is a ton of it. The combined document files for FRED (the friendly editor), for example, come to a monumental 30k or 4,000 odd words. This can be a real put-off for the beginner to programming.

Now normally we moan about lack of documentation but in this case there are just not enough Easy Guides or short-cuts. The sheer weight of written matter is enough to scare most people away from the very useful programs which lie within the disc. This is compounded by the fact that the writing style is convoluted. Do persevere however; in fact, do as we did after a while ... forget the paper and try experimenting with the software which is fairly easy to get to grips with.

These moans put to one side, BASIC Needs serves two very necessary purposes. Not only does it make the programmer's life that bit more creative by cutting down on the drudgery, it also makes the RNLI more able to cope.

BASIC NEEDS

PLUSES

- ▲ Cheap for five utilities
- ▲ Easy to use
- ▲ Loads of features
- ▲ Uses of LocoScript keys

MINUSES

- ▼ Too much documentation
- ▼ Not enough easy guides to use

RANGE OF FEATURES	5/5	EASE OF USE	4/5
DOCUMENTATION	2/5	PERFORMANCE	5/5
8000 PLUS VALUE VERDICT			16/20



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GOLDEN RETRIEVER

Rob Ainsley shows you how to get to grips with sorting, storing and selecting in your favourite database

Run up Masterfile and load up the example file called X01BOOKS, a list of a book collection. Press [D] to display and you see the file displayed in Format 1, name-and-author, in order of author. Pressing [R] rotates formats, and you'll see that formats 0 and 2 have information additional to name and author one record to a screen, while formats 3 and 5 consist solely of headings to make on-screen messages.

Now you can display the collection in order of title instead of author. Get the format you want by pressing [R]. To change the order, press [K]. You are asked to give the number of the item to order the new display by, and format 0 is temporarily displayed to jog your memory. Give 2, the number for the title. Now you are asked for key length; this means the number of letters Masterfile will base the sort on. For example, if you give 2, then you might find that MOBY DICK was sorted after MOZZARELLA, because Masterfile doesn't look beyond the second letter. Obviously you have to select a figure bigger than this, especially if a lot of titles might begin the same way (if you have 50 books entitled "The Bluffer's Guide To..." for example) so make it something like 10.

You see the re-sequenced list appear almost instantly on screen and can move through by pressing [ENTER] or return to the beginning with B as usual. For 'equal' entries (with the first ten letters or whatever figure you gave the same) you'll find them in the order that they were before resequencing. So two books of the same title would now be in the author order, for example.

So, if you wanted your record collection in order of title, but equal titles in order of performer (e.g. all Beethoven's Fifths in order of conductor) you would sort first by performer and then by title.

Notice that you can't now change formats; pressing [R] has no effect. You can, however, re-sequence on something not in the formal – the date, for example. You can't resequence on item 1 (here, the author) – to get it displayed as normal, just press [X] then [D] to display. Whenever the file redispays, it does so in the normal order.

Remember also that unfortunately Masterfile can't properly sort numbers or dates into order, as a misprint in the first part of this series implied.

Select committee

Being able to re-sequence is only the start. Another useful facility is to select certain groups of records; suppose you want books by one author, ANON say. The command to select is [S]; on pressing this another menu, number 4, comes up with more options. You want to 'select by compare', i.e. select just those records whose author is ANON. Now you can type the search criteria in the box at the bottom left. Type Author=ANON and [RETURN] and you see the message 'Selected 018' appear at the bottom – from now until further notice, you only get these 18 records displayed. Type [D] now and the 18 selected are shown; you can re-sequence or reformal them as before with [K] or [R]. To get all the records selected again, press [S] for select then [E] for all. (Not [E] while displaying records, as this is the command to erase the currently selected record!)

You could have just typed au=anon because Masterfile only needs enough letters to be able to identify the field. Similarly you could just type 't1' for title, 'da' for date and so on. The fact that it takes 'anon' and 'ANON' as equivalent is

something you can change by pressing [U] from menu 4, though you rarely need to do this.

Again, suppose you want to display all those books written after 1900. Press [S] for select, then [C] for compare. This time give the condition as da>1900 you see that 17 are selected. Notice that it makes this selection from the 107 entries in the main database, even if you just marked out the 18 ANON ones. You can't progressively select this way. If you want to select a double condition – say all the ANON books written after 1880 – you have to use sets, described below.

Here are some sorts of conditions you can enter using [C] for compare: da<1900 all books written before 1900; da<=1900 or da>=1900 all books written before or on or after 1900; da>=1900 or da>>1900 all books written on or after 1900; da=1900 books written in 1900; au=ANON Author is ANON, au<>ANON Author is not ANON

If the thing being compared is a numeric item, the comparison will be numeric (i.e. 9 before 10); if it is a character item, it will be character (i.e. 10 before 9); if it is a date, it will be a date (i.e. 01 Jan 90 before 01 Apr 90).

Inside out

The option [I] for 'invert' after selecting some items can be useful. It makes the selection into all the entries not previously selected. So if you selected items on the basis of au=ANON, then invert the selection by pressing [I] to invert (and [S] first if necessary to get the menu 4 on screen) you end with the same as if you'd selected on au<>ANON.

With text though you have to be careful. Suppose you want all addresses in London from your name-address database. What you want is a command that says 'select all addresses that include the word London in there somewhere'. This is (au)=London which has the corresponding opposite command (au)<>London for all non-London addresses.

Of course, this gets confused by addresses like 'London House, Bath' or 'London Road, Hull' or ones in Londonderry, so you'll have to remove those manually.

If you save a database ([L] from the main menu followed by [S]) with some items selected, you'll save

Special services

You can select over all parts of each record. For example in a name-and-address database 'London' selects all records with the word 'London' in anywhere – the address, the name, the company title or whatever. You can also select things which have something or nothing in a certain place. In the book database, title= selects all items with a title, whatever it is. The opposite is title<> which selects all items without a title.



MASTERFILE

Which Smith?

To find a certain record - say you want to look up Fred Smith's address - one way is to hit [S] for 'select' then C for 'compare'. Then type (na)=Smith and all the Smiths are selected. [D] for 'display' and you should find his address in a jiffy - unless you have the London Telephone book on disc!

it all, but in the state it was when you saved - i.e. just some selected, though you can select everything again by pressing [S] from the main menu then [E]. If however you save with [P] instead of [S] ('save partial file') you save just the selected records and no more - so be careful to save under another name so as not to overwrite the main file! Using [P] can be useful to make a separate sub-file of your main database.

Set point

Very often though you will want to select on various criteria. Suppose in the book database you have created, you want a list of all post-1890 anonymous books, or all those pre-1890 published by the Religious Tract Society. For this you have to work in sets.

As above, select from the main database all anonymous books. This time, just after selecting, press [A] for 'assign to set' and give '1' as the set number. Masterfile makes a separate set from the main database called Set 1 with those 18 anonymous books in it. A panel appears on screen telling you what's in each set so far, giving number in each set and what the search condition you typed was.

Now press [C] to select by comparison again. Give the condition da>1890 and then press [A] and '2' to assign these to set 2. This now has all post-1890 books in it. Similarly, select a further set on the condition (pu)=Religious T and all the Religious Tract Society's books are selected; assign these to set 3.

Now you want to select from these sets. With menu 4 still up press [S] for 'select by set'. You see three letters, each to specify the sort of selection you are about to make. [A] means 'I want things which are found in each of the sets I'm about to list'. N means 'I want things which appear in none of the sets I'm about to list'. [S] means 'I want things which appear in any one or more of the sets I'm about to list'.

So, given that Set 1 = anonymous books (18 altogether) Set 2 = post-1890 books (49 of these) Set 3 = pub. by Religious Tract Society (40) then the effect of these presses would be as follows: A2 : all post-1890 books (i.e. Set 2) (40 of these) A12 : all post-1890 anon books (3) A123 : all post-1890 anon books pub. by the RTS (2) A13 : all anon books pub. by RTS (11) N1 : all non-anon books (89 - which is 107-

04: Search Mode
Select by compare.....C
Select by set....S
Select every record...E
Invert select status...I
Assign selected to set...A
Clear one or more sets...Z
Show set counts...#
Describe a set...T
Go to display...D
Go to main menu...X

Set 1 = 18 anon
Set 2 = 49 da>1890
Set 3 = 40 (pu)=Religious T
Set 4 = 0
Set 5 = 0
Set 6 = 0
Set 7 = 0

If necessary, press # and the count for each set will appear

COMPLETE LIST OF CHILDREN'S BOOKS: late 19th/early 20th centuries

Author	Title
ANON	Christie's Old Organ; Or, "Home Sweet Home"
ANON	When I Was Young; Or, Gideon And His Grandchildren
ANON	The Norries; A Tale Of Radford Village
ANON	The Basset Of Flowers; Or, Piety And Truth Triumphant
ANON	Nellie Grey; Or, The Ups And Downs Of Every-Day Life
ANON	Wapping Old Stairs
ANON	The Exiles Of Spitzbergen
ANON	The Orphans Of Glen Elder, A Tale Of Scottish Life
ANON	The Babes In The Basket; Or, Dash And Her Charge
ANON	Waifs And Strays, A Story Of London Streets
ANON	Little Lily's Travels, A Book For The Young
ANON	The Land Of The Mammoth; Or, A Boy's Arctic Adventures...
ANON	The Little Model And Other Stories
ANON	Kitty Brown Beginning To Think
ANON	Life's Battle Lost And Won Or Robert Joy's Victory
ANON	Necessity And Contrivance; Or, Food, Clothing And Shelter
ANON	Grace Dermott; Or, Help For The Afflicted
ANON	Which Wins The Prize?

Printout of just the anonymous books in format 1

Print shop

To print, first you have to make sure the printer setup is right, and this is stored in the Format. So, from the main menu, select [F] for 'format mainmenu' then [V] for 'view/alter' then the number of the format. Now press [P] for 'printer options'. A menu with the various settings appears. Use up and down cursors to move to the element to change, and use right and left cursors to change it.

For example, Masterfile expects continuous paper. To change to single sheet, press the left cursor until 'Forms depth' goes down from 'inf' (i.e. continuous) to 64. To select bold printing, go down to 'Emphasised' and flag it with an arrow by pressing the right cursor. Similarly you can set the left margin, the width of the printing, lines per inch on printout, elite (12 point) or not (10 point) or condensed (15 point) and so on. When the settings are right, exit by pressing Xs to get back to the main menu. The print settings for the format are saved when you save of course.

Now display the selection of records you want: the whole set, or just your London customers, or just the anonymous books, or whatever. Make sure they're in the right sorted order and format you want too. Now press [P] and away you go.

16) N23 : all non-RTS books 1890 or earlier (36) S13 : all books either anonymous or published by RTS, or both (47) S123: all books either anonymous or RTS or post-1890 (77 altogether) and so on.

But what if you want, say, all books which are either anonymous, or post-1890 RTS? None of the above operations will do, and you cannot try two successive selections, because every selection is done from scratch. What you want to do is select all the anonymous books, then add the members common to sets 2 and 3 onto it: a 'cumulative' search. To do this, first select using [A]1 (all anon books) then press [S] for 'set' again and press [A]23 (for all post-1890 RTS books) but this time add a + sign: [A]23+. This tells Masterfile to do a cumulative search and the required result is obtained.

You can display selections using [D] as usual, resequence, reformat them, and they will be saved when you save the file. To clear a set, use [Z] from the menu 4.

20th centuries

Printer Options
Forms depth 64
Interleave -
Left margin 05
Continuous
Lines per inch 6
Draft
Zero slash -
Elite
Condensed
Emphasised
Double strike -
Enlarged -
UK
Width 90

Author Format:1

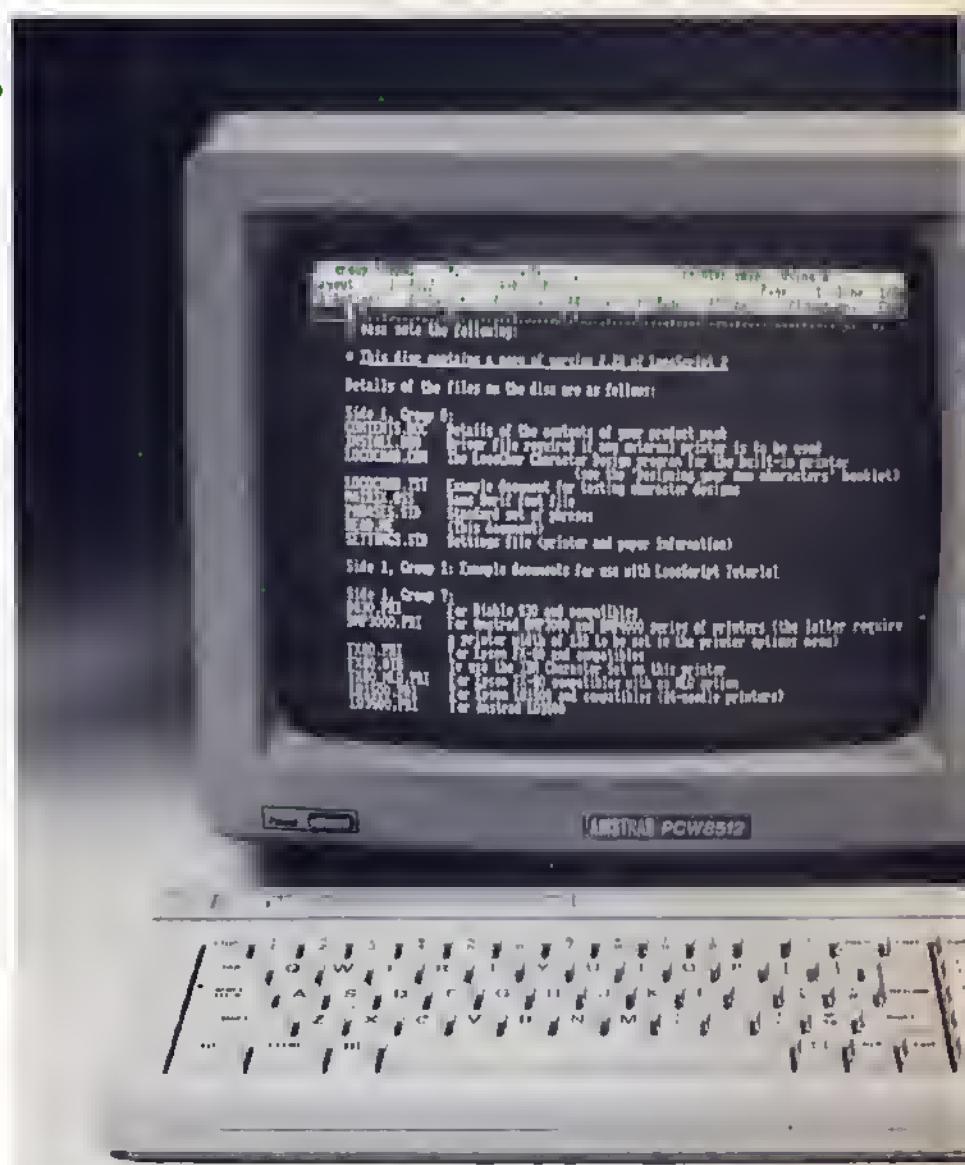
The printer menu is accessed from the relevant format in this case, format 1.

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- Adds a wider choice of layout features
- Gives more options for Find and Exchange
- The Save and Continue option returns you back to your original place in your document
- Prints multiple copies of your document
- Offers a wide choice of paper types to print your documents - for example: A4, A5, 11" continuous or 3" labels.
- Will convert your existing LocoScript documents as you need them
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LocoScript 2 is the powerful, more versatile successor to the LocoScript supplied with the PCW 8256/8512. For only £24.95 you'll get more from your PCW than ever before

Giving you more for your PCW.



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LocoScript 2 with LocoSpell

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Address _____

I enclose a cheque for Total £

Please charge my Access/Visa card

EXP Date _____

Signed _____

Send to Katy Buchan at:



LOCOMOTIVE
SOFTWARE
Dorking,
Surrey, RH4 1YL

Postcode _____

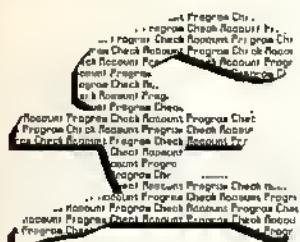
Note: All prices include VAT and UK postage

THE BEST IN ACCOUNTS

CHECK ACCOUNT II

(Issue 36, page 29)

£14.95 • Molesott • 0372 275053



CHECK ACCOUNT TWO

MONEY MANAGER PCW

(Issue 36, page 54)

£49.95 • Connect Software Ltd • 01 743 9792

**MONEY
MANAGER**
FOR THE AMSTRAD

The best and most flexible personal accounts system. No doubt as an inexpensive business system.

A friendly little package, this, for those organised PCW owners who want to keep track of their household accounts. In fact you can store the details of up to four separate accounts on one disc – like your current account, your spouse's current account, your joint account, your savings account, and so on. The program's main ace is its comprehensive interest-calculating options and its ability to handle up to 111 standing orders a year – into or out of each account. This menu-driven program's a front-runner when it comes to home accounting.

This income and expenditure analyser is a must for the small business owner or club organiser who wants to implement a computerised accounting system without going to the trouble of getting to grips with a large, complex system. The added bonus with Money Manager is its bar or pie graph-printing option which provides a welcome visual interpretation of stored data (9512 owners beware: no graphic printout on the daisywheel printer). Thorough and thoughtfully-created coding and categorising options coupled with lucid screen displays make Money Manager a winner.

BUSINESS CONTROLLER

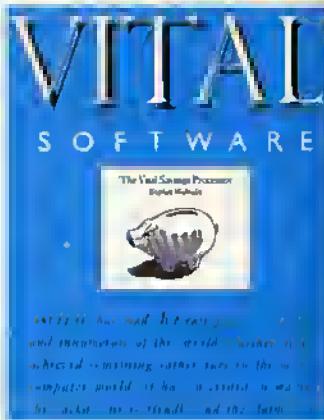
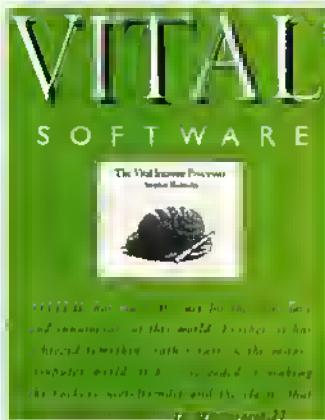
(Issue 16, page 37)

£99.95 • Digma International • 0395 270273

**BUSINESS
CONTROLLER**

DIGITA
INTERNATIONAL
FOR THE
AMSTRAD PCW

This program might be worth looking at if you're controlling the accounts of a larger PCW-toting small business. Coming packaged with a well-constructed manual and a ready-to-go nominal ledger, this program's most original feature is its ability to automatically calculate financial ratios of the type which you would ordinarily have had to work out independently. Our main criticism of the program in the past was that it didn't handle VAT. Now that Digma have included this option, Business Controller is probably one of the best all-rounders your money can buy.



CALLING ACCOUNT

Let's face it: accounts programs are not renowned for their ability to get the adrenalin pumping unless, of course, it is in sheer blind frustration. Approachability is not their strong point. That said, these two pages represent a pick-and-mix collection of some of the best accounts packages (whether for the home or the office). PCW users will have already flipped the pages of *18 8000 PLUS*. We'll leave to you to read page numbers of the software reviews if you want to read what's inside. So, if you're buying any of these programs, you'll need to buy at least 60 boxes and 100 discs.

VITAL PROCESSOR SERIES

(Issue 23, pages 42/3)

£29.95 / £39.95 each • Vital Software • 0732 810330

A suite of three carefully worked out programs (you can buy them individually) that have been designed to help you keep track of your savings, your insurance policies and your income. You would have to be an exceedingly organised person to get the most out of these programs as the initial outlay on time alone will be considerable. The Savings Processor will be good news for anyone with a collection of stocks and shares, say, interested in working out their net worth, whereas The Insurance Processor encourages you to divide all your possessions into various categories so that you can make an inventory to ascertain their respective values. The Incomes Processor, on the other hand, permits you to set up a budget file enabling you to monitor expenditure against income. A very useful trio to have around.



SIMPLE ACCOUNTS II

(Issue 34, page 12)

£99.95 • Cornix Software • 0234 219965

AMSTRAD PCW



SIMPLE ACCOUNTS II

AMSTRAD PCW8256 PCW8512 PCW9512



BOOK-KEEPING MADE EASY

Full Analysis of Income and Expenditure
Complete Record of Sales and Purchase
Constant Update on Creditors and Debtors
Monitoring and Review Current Bank Balances
VAT Returns Completed in Seconds

Another aptly-named and very well designed piece of software from the Cornix stable, this time for the small business. It attains the ideal of realistic accounts practice in that it is based on a common business assumption: making a legal sale (raising an invoice) does not equal receiving the cash for it. Actual sales and purchases are recorded as new information while the transfer of cash on these transactions is carried out by cancelling the former's 'unpaid' tag. Special features include up to 40 categories each for sales/purchases, and a record 'call up' facility. Simple Accounts is a truly excellent program which competes comfortably with more elaborate accounts software.

SAGE POPULAR ACCOUNTS

(Issue 16, page 37)

£87 plus VAT • Sagesoft • 091 2131555

No spread on the best accounts packages for the PCW would be complete without this one, the grand-daddy of them all. It's a highly complex piece of software: in the right hands, it will tame your accounting nightmare. In the wrong hands, it will drive you to distraction. You must also be prepared to spend quite a lot of time, initially, setting up your parameters to ensure that the software will be working with you, not against you. Be warned: this program is recommended only if you are operating quite a large business, if you are not new to accounting and if you feel at home in front of a computer.

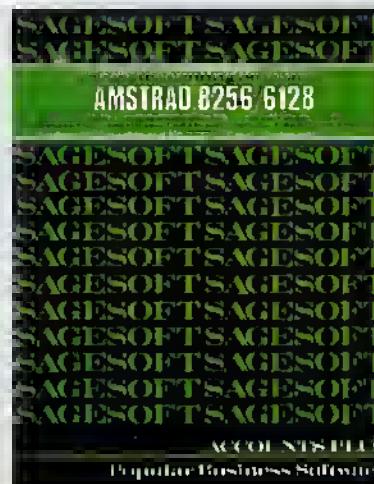
INTACT

For the Amstrad PCW 8256/8512

INTACT

(Issue 7, page 34/5)

£74.95 • Cavalier Software • 01 639 6683



Another accounts package for the small- to medium-sized business. Operating in much the same way as a database, a good deal of attention has been given to creditor and debtor details. Intact even has the facility to set up special classifications so that, for example, all the customers or suppliers in one particular area can be called up and grouped together. On the whole, then, Intact constitutes a well-rounded program that will be able to monitor your company's financial transactions in all the ways that matter.

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MICRO *design*

MANUAL "Comprehensive, immensely friendly and will lead you where you want to go." "It takes about an hour or so to get on speaking terms."

FEATURES "Does everything you are likely to need in designing and laying-out your artwork" ... "Text...will automatically flow around the picture..." "Very last..." **PRINTING** "Extremely high resolution prints which set the software apart from its competition." **THE ACCOLADES** "Surpasses anything else - Does almost everything better - This beats the lot! Results are superb - Brilliant and sophisticated - Beats the opposition hands down - New lease of life for the PCW."

★ TYPESETTING ★ TEXT EDITING ★ PAGE LAYOUT GRAPHICS ★ FONT DESIGN ★ PRINTING

Runs on the PCW 8256, 8512 and 9512. Fully compatible with files from LocoScript 2, Protext, Wordstar, AMX Stop Press, The Desktop Publisher, Mini-Office Professional, Rombo Vidi Digitiser, MasterScan and other PCW software packages. Supports most popular Mouse systems and 9 pin, 24 pin and Laser printers, including the Siar LC-10 Colour Printer.

Huge range of fonts (25 built in), Typesyles and Typesetting functions. Extensive range of Graphic Art and Design facilities.

MICRDESIGN II (£36.52 + VAT) = £42

With PCW Mouse and Through Interface (£76.09 + VAT) = £87.50

CD/LOUR BROCHURE ON REQUEST (Large SAE appreciated)

SuperDOS

ARE YOU ONLY USING HALF YOUR PCW?

If you have difficulty understanding and using CP/M then SuperDOS is for you. SuperDOS converts CP/M and its' unhelpful As prompt to LocoScript partitioning. "The main use for SuperDOS is as a disc/file manager." With SuperDOS you can run all your CP/M programs and batch files. Balches of files can be copied with "an immensely useful system called tagging." You can "create, edit and print out Notepads... simple and immensely useful." "SuperDOS is an excellent tool." Quotes from 8000 Plus. Not suitable for the unexpanded PCW 8256, or hard disc drives. SuperDDS costs (£25.17 + VAT) = £28.95

EXTERNAL DOT MATRIX PRINTERS

We have researched budget printers for you and we recommend the STAR LC24-10, the Citizen Swift 24 (has colour option) the Panasonic KX-P1124 with expanded buffer and the Epson LO550

We no longer supply printers but will be pleased to supply the peripherals and accessories for your chosen printer.

Besides a printer, PCW 8256/8512 owners will need an interface and a Printer Cable. We also strongly recommend LocoScript 2. PCW 9512 owners will require a printer cable. For all PCWs we recommend Locomotive's Printer Drivers Disc and/or the 24 pin Printer Drivers Disc for maximum compatibility with LocoScript 2.

PERIPHERALS AND ACCESSORIES

CABLES, PRINTER, Top quality PCW9512 to centronics printer	£5.95
PCW 8256/8512 (interface required) to Centronics printer	£9.95
MODEM CABLE RS232 Interface Data Transfer to Modem	£14.95
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"DDNGLE" Adaptor Export PCW to interface, RamPac etc	£21.95
RIBBONS (including VAT, P&P) LC 10 £4.60 + £4.30 LC 10 Colour £6.90, 5+ £6.20 (also takes black for economy) LC24-10/LC24-15 £5.75, 5+ £5.25	
AUTO Cut Sheet Feeder LC-10, LC-10C few only (£49 + VAT) = £56.35	
BBD Dust Covers (Incl VAT P&P) 8256/8512 (grey 3pc)	£11.45
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STAR LC 10, LC-10C, LC24-10, LC24-15 (slate grey or ivory)	£4.95
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MDDEM Pace Innen V21/V23 Intelligent Modem. Ideal for LocoScript 2 and PC data interchange over the telephone	£126.04 + VAT = £144.95
MASTER PAINT Graphics package (not 9512) £13.95 With PCW mouse.. £59.50	
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Replaces AMX Mouse (same specification). Available early May .. (£43.04) = £49.50	

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LocoLink. A special cable that links your PCW Expansion slot to a PC, together with the Software to enable you to transfer LocoScript 2 files to the PC. LocoLink costs (£18.70 + VAT) = £21.50 on its own or

To purchasers of LocoScript PC (£13.87 + VAT) =

£15.95

512K RamPac

The SCA RamPac is the first successful Memory Expansion above 512K that does not invalidate any PCW warranty. Only RamPac is approved by Locomotive Software. RamPac simply plugs onto the back of any PCW and immediately increases the capacity of Drive M by 512K. It is compatible with MicroDesign 2, Flipper and most PCW programs.

CMOS RAM prices are down - so is RamPac RamPac 512K Memory Expansion (£99 + VAT)

£113.85

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* PCW 8256 256K Memory Upgrade kit to 512K (£26.04 + VAT) = £29.95

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* FD2 second drive for PCW 8256 (as available) (£107.87 + VAT) = £124

* NEW 500K FD1 for 8256/8512 drive A service replacement (£86.09 + VAT) = £99

* NEW 1MB FD4 for 9512 drive A service replacement (£103.48 + VAT) = £119

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(+Charkil)..... £17.95	LocoSpell 2..... £17.45
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Locomotiv Sel 1..... £16.95	LocoMail..... £24.50
Locomotiv Sel 2..... £12.95	LocoFile..... £22.95

For the PCW 9512

Printer Drivers Disc	24 Pin Printer Drivers..... £20.95
(+Charkil)..... £17.95	LocoFile..... £22.95

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(Coolchange Ltd)

TAKING STOCK

LocoScriptin' Lankenau gets down among the stock layouts and learns just how versatile your favourite word processor is

LocoScript 2 is a program which lends itself particularly well to both the organised mind, and the mind which is in need of organisation. If you have fully exploited the potential of the program's filing system, you should have similar documents grouped together in up to eight files on any one disc. Different groups will require different layouts; a batch of business letters is unlikely to warrant the same format as a series of newsletters or magazine articles, for example. The use of the program's Stock Layouts offers you a labour-saving way of storing and importing predetermined formats at the touch of (a few) keys.

Fasten your seatbelts

When you create a new document in LocoScript 2, the program provides you with a simple, built-in layout from which to work. It operates a bit like an aircraft on autopilot – nothing will change unless you command it to. However, the Stock Layout facility allows you to create and store a set of permanent layout guidelines, tailor-made to suit the purpose of the group within which you are working.

To override the automatic layout on screen, you need to set up a template which instructs LocoScript how to present text. The template may comprise up to nine Stock Layouts, which should be ample to serve the needs of any one group. Once this is set up, every time you create a document within a group, LocoScript homes in on the template, ignoring the autopilot altogether.

The creation of a template requires a small amount of pre-planning. At the Disc Management Screen, select a group with the cursor keys, and press [C] for 'create'. Replace DOCUMENT.000 with TEMPLATE.STD. As an example, we are going to set up a series of stock layouts for an article concerning literary criticism (for use, say, at school or college) involving body text and quotations.

Press [F1] for 'Actions'. 'Document set up' should be highlighted. If it isn't, move the cursor to the appropriate place, and press [ENTER] to continue. The screen now shows you four, double-spaced lines, containing information about headers and footers. Ignore these – but do make sure to note that the [F] commands on the disc management screen have changed.

Press [SHIFT][F2] and select 'Change stock layouts'. Layout 0 remains the same, but there are nine fresh aspects of your Stock Layout to compose. A large proportion of the document we are planning will be devoted to chunks of text – a Stock Layout which will replace the in-built Layout 1. Select this layout (see screenshot 1), press [ENTER] and you are in editing mode. The best way to proceed is to refer to the [F] commands at the top of the disc management screen. Work through them from left to right, and you will be certain to have covered every feature of layout composition which the program offers you.

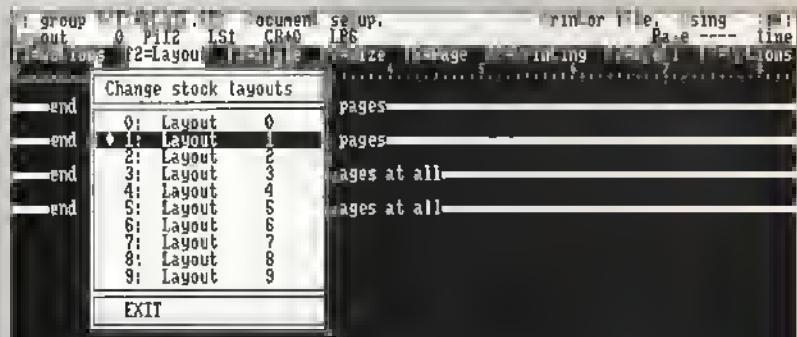
Summing up

Look to the broken ruler line at the top of the second section of the screen. The scale runs from 0 to 90 characters. Move the cursor to, say, 10 for the left hand margin, and press [F1] for 'margins'. Select 'Set left margin' and press [ENTER]. Now move the cursor over to 75 on the ruler line; [F1] and 'Set

right margin', followed by [ENTER] secures the right margin. The final step is to name the layout. Select [F7] for 'Name' and choose a name which is both relevant, and likely to jog your memory. Type in 'Body text'. Press [ENTER], and the new title appears at the top left-hand side of the screen.

The next Stock layout to create will be for the insertion of quotations into the document. [EXIT] delivers ➤

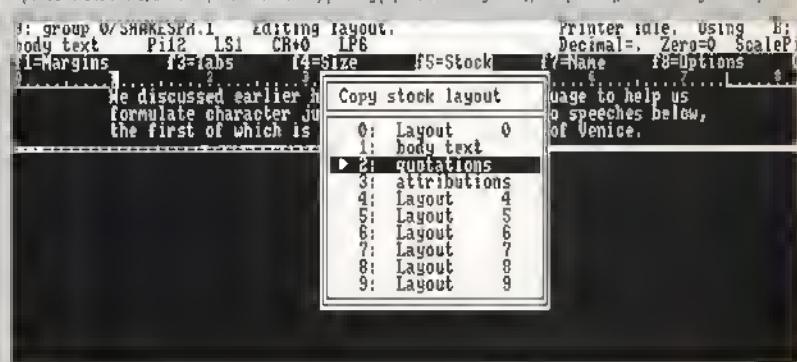
So just what is on the menu, anyway?



By creating a 'TEMPLATE.STD', you can override LocoScript 2's built-in layout. Select 'Layout 1' and use it to formulate the 'body text' of your document. You can then create eight more Stock layouts tailor-made to suit the needs of the group in which you are working.



Put it on the tab! To ensure that the 'attribution' lines up with the right hand side of the quotation above it, move the cursor to the appropriate point on the ruler line, and call up the 'tabs' menu by pressing [F3]. Select 'Set right tab', press [ENTER], and a neat alignment is yours.



When all your stock layouts have been created, you can start writing the document. Every time you need a different layout, press [F5] to see what is on offer, select the one you need followed by [ENTER] [EXIT], and watch the margins change accordingly.

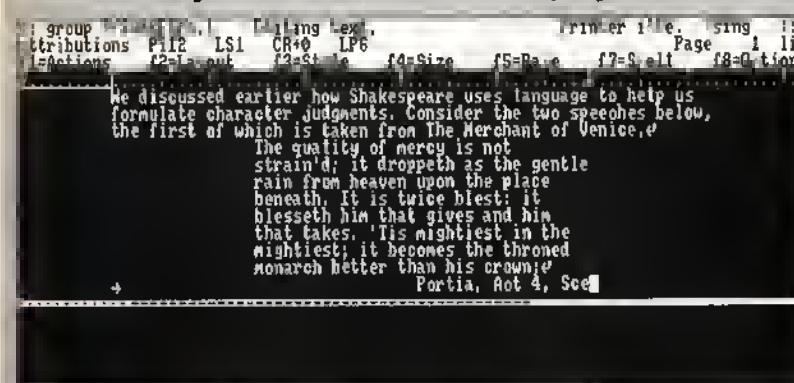
LOCOSCRIPT

you back to the drop-down menu showing the Stock Layouts; (notice the appearance of the newly-created 'Body text' layout on the menu now). Select 'Layout 2' followed by [ENTER], and you are returned to editing mode. The text length needs to be shorter this time, and a bit of simple mathematics will help you set a centred location for the quotation somewhere between points 10 and 75 on the ruler line. Set the left hand margin, (using the [f1] key command) at 25, repeating the procedure above, and the right hand margin at 60. Name the Stock layout using the [f7] key command – type in 'quotation', and press [ENTER],[EXIT] and you are back to the drop menu displaying Stock Layouts.

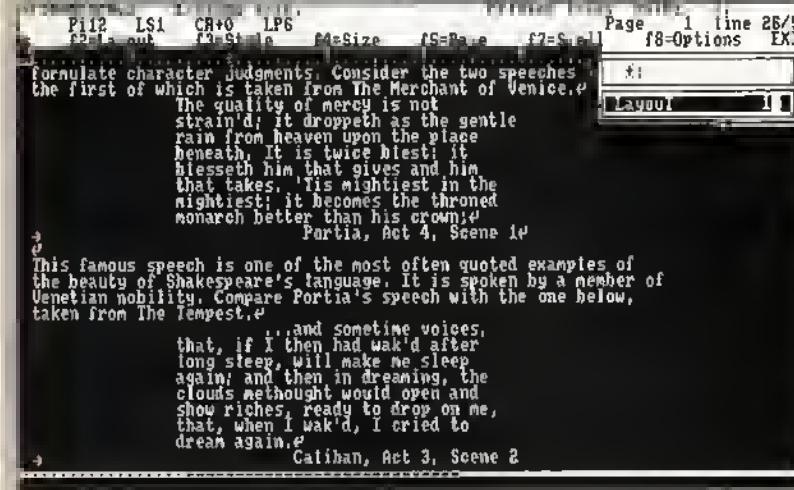
Who said that?

Layout 3 will be devoted to attributions, or the people to whom the quotation is credited. We need a right-justified line, so that the attribution is always aligned to the right side of the quotation. Don't worry if it doesn't always look that way on

If layouts be the food of love, lay on...



Don't adjust your eyesight - you may think that you are reading an Arabic version of Shakespeare but you are not. Right-tabling means that letters appear from right to left as you type them in. This is no problem if your document is made up of palindromes of course



LocoScript always rewards the most diligent of its students by showing you a short-cut. Here, a simple key command ([+] LT1 [ENTER]) dispenses with hefty drop-down menus when invoking a stock layout. In favour of a discreet box at the top right of the screen.

screen - if a word in a quotation is too long, the automatic carriage return imposed by the pre-set right hand margin will make the text continue on the following line. The tabbed attribution might, therefore, appear slightly misaligned. However, go into editing mode again (select 'Stock layout 3', and press [ENTER]). Move the cursor to the same position as the right hand margin of the quotation, 60, and press [f3] for 'tabs'. Using the down 'arrow' key, select 'set right tab' (see screenshot 2) followed by [ENTER]. To make the attribution stand out from the quotation even more, we are going to italicise it. Go to 'Options' on the top right hand side of the screen using [SHIFT] and [f8]. Choose 'Italic' and press [ENTER]. Name this Stock Layout 'attribution' by selecting

[f7], replacing Layout 3 with the new name you have chosen, and pressing [ENTER].

'f' key or not 'f' key

You have now created a small series of Stock Layouts which exist to serve the specific needs of an essay or thesis. To see how they work in practice, press [EXIT], select 'Finish edit' and return to the disc management screen. Create a document in the same group, and name it **Shakespr.1**. The fresh screen shows 'body text' in the top left hand corner, proving that LocoScript 2 has ignored its auto-pilot, and used TEMPLATE.STD as its guideline for layout. Begin typing in some body text. Stop after about three lines - you have now decided that it is time for a quotation. Leave the cursor at the end of the last line of body text and look to the [f] commands at the top of the screen. Select 'Layout' using [SHIFT] together with [f2].

You need a 'New Layout' for quotations, so press [ENTER]. Now call up the choice of Stock layouts you have created, by pressing [f5]. The drop menu showing these is now entitled 'Copy Stock Layouts', and lists what is on offer. Select 'quotations' (see screenshot 3) [ENTER], and watch the margins change on the ruler line. Press [EXIT], and the cursor will re-appear at the pre-determined left margin - together with an arrow which contains all the information about the stock layout with which you have just dispensed.

Type in the quotation, leaving the cursor at the end of the last line. To insert the attribution, press [f2] for 'Layout', and select 'New Layout' again. Go to [f5] for 'Stock' and then select 'Attributions' as the stock layout to copy. [ENTER] and [EXIT] returns the cursor to the appropriate place on the screen. Press the [TAB] key on the left of your keyboard, and type in the name and any other details - in this case, the Act and Scene number where the speech occurs (see screenshot 4). Watching the text appearing from right to left is a slightly odd sensation, but you soon grow accustomed to it!

Bodily functions

To go back to the body text again, go to [f2], select 'New layout', [f5] and select 'body text' followed by [ENTER] and [EXIT]. Continue through the document invoking the stock layouts which are appropriate for the section you are writing - you will soon become familiar with the routine of key commands, and the speed with which you are able to call up and send away your stock layouts quickly increases.

If you have studied LocoScript in any depth, you will know that the reward for learning any new procedure is to then be told about the shortcut. Stock Layouts are no exception. Go back to the document. Say you are at the end of an attribution; leave the cursor on the last letter of the text. To summon the Stock layout for 'body text', all you have to do is press [+] to the left of the spacebar, and type in 'LT1' - the number for our 'body text' layout. A smaller menu will appear, far less distracting for the business of serious stock layout swapping. Press [ENTER], and the cursor will re-appear at the appropriate place on screen (see screenshot 5).

It is worth considering at this point that if you have made use of all nine Stock Layouts, you may not instantly remember the number of the layout you have named. To avoid this, why not jot down the names and numbers of the layouts as you create them. Keep the list close to your screen, and you will reduce the possibility of transforming your body text into the width-restricted form of quotations! This quick method of invoking a Stock layout will not automatically put a carriage return in the text, so remember to insert one if necessary.

The use of stock layouts in a lengthy document will save you a great deal of effort in text composition. This aspect of LocoScript 2 demonstrates yet another example of the way in which the program allows you to manipulate text in a process which is both economical in time and versatile in motion. ■

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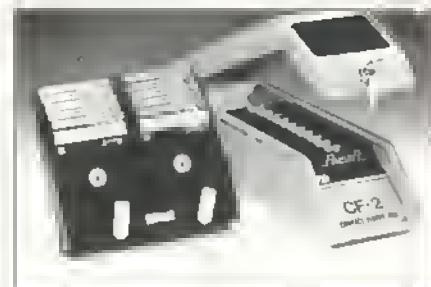


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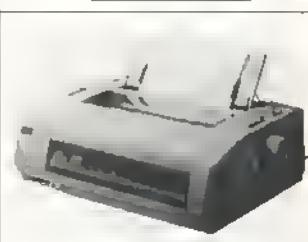
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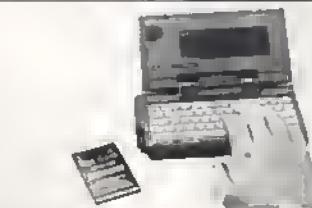
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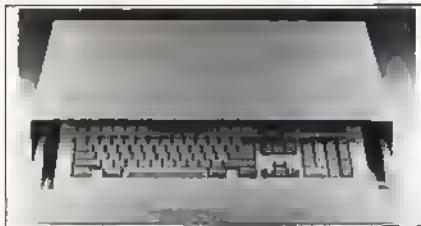
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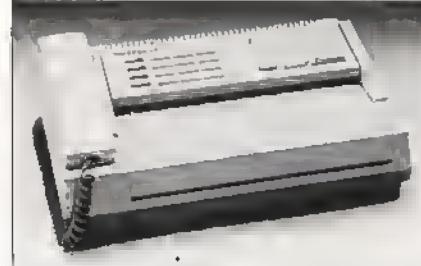
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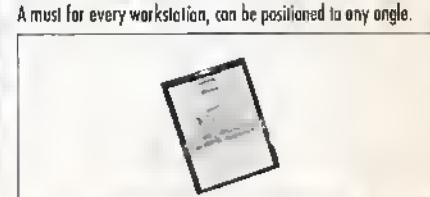
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COUNTING THE COST

Household power costs money. Tony Hart gets together with Mini Office Professional to show you how you can work out exactly how much you're spending

Do you know how many cubic feet of gas you burn each week? Do you know how many 'therms' this equates to? Do you know how much these therms cost per week? Likewise, you've no doubt seen the electricity meter whizzing round when electric-tires, immersion-heaters and dish-washers are all going but, do you know what this means in pounds and pence?

Have you ever wondered exactly how much extra it costs you to leave your central-heating on all day? Maybe it's less than you think! And what about the effectiveness of the newly installed double-glazing or the cavity wall insulation? Could you evaluate the payback period?

The way to the truth

If you'd like to answer all these questions then all you need is Mini-Office or any other spreadsheet, 10 minutes to read this article and then 20 minutes on your PCW. After that, all you have to do is enter two numbers, one your gas-meter reading – the other your electricity meter reading, once a week into your spreadsheet and Mini-Office does the rest!

This article assumes some familiarity with spreadsheet operation and explains the set-up in easy-to-follow stages.

- Getting started
- Laying out the text
- Putting in the fixed charge values like the Pence Per Therm or the Quarterly Standing Charge
- Entering the formulae that calculate the weekly power costs. There are only five!
- Entering the data, or the weekly values of your gas and electricity meters.
- Finally adding comments to the spreadsheet.

To start, load Mini Office. Go straight to the spreadsheet by typing `sheet` at the `A>` prompt. Move the cursor to the `Edit Data` line and press [ENTER]. You will be presented with an empty spreadsheet with only the column and row numbers shown. The cursor will be 'waiting' in cell A1 (column A, row 1).

Screenshot 1, below, shows the spreadsheet after set-up and prior to any data-entry and calculation. The set-up consists of two stages, firstly the text set-up then the fixed parameter set-up.

The text set-up is straightforward; all text strings are entered by the `[ALT]/[S]` text string command. Let's input the **Counting the Cost** title. Move the cursor to cell D1. Hold down the `[ALT]` key and press S. Type the text, 'Counting the Cost', and, finally, press [ENTER]. Now enter the other text by moving the cursor to the relevant cell using the same `[ALT]/[S]` method.

The screenshot shows a sheet set-up for gas and electricity. If your home is all electric or oil and electric then you'll finally need to change the text and layout to suit. For the time being stick with the example until you've got the hang of the theory.

Putting in the charges

This is where we enter the power rates and standing charges into the sheet. This is done only once! Or at least until the next time that the price of fuel rises.

For these fixed charge entries, (Cells D5,6,7 and H5,6), you need your gas bill and/or your electricity bill. See screenshot 2 and inset below. Your gas bill gives the Pence/Therm, Standing Charge and BTUs per Therm numbers. Your electricity bill gives the Pence/Unit and

Entering your weekly data

Once you've set up the spreadsheet you have to drag yourself away from your PCW and find your electricity and gas meters. If you're the kind of non-technical person that tends not to bother about major technological advances like power meters and doesn't know where they are, try the broom cupboard, under the kitchen sink, inside the water-tank cupboard or in the garage. If you're lucky you will find that you have digital gas and electricity meters which are very easy to read (see insets 5 and 6 below). Simply write down the numbers shown. If not, you could have a gas meter that still uses the analogue method of measuring units used. If you can't figure out the reading, get your last gas bill and compare the reading with the position of the pointers – this should help you out.

Counting the cost					
Gas Charges			Electricity Charges		
Pence/Therm	Standing Charge	BTU/CuFt	Pence/Unit	Quarterly Charge	
39.80	0.70	1040.00	6.00	24.25	
Units Meter Reading Used	Pence Per Unit Cost	Meter Reading Used	Meter Reading Used	Units Used	Weekly Total Cost

The spreadsheet after set-up and prior to data-entry and calculations. Setting up the text is perfectly straightforward; all text strings are entered by the `[ALT]/[S]` text string command

Counting the Cost					
Gas Charges			Electricity Charges		
Pence/Therm	Standing Charge	BTU/CuFt	Pence/Unit	Quarterly Charge	
39.80	0.70	1040.00	6.00	24.25	
Week Number	Meter Reading Used	Meter Reading Used	Meter Reading Used	Units Used	Weekly Total Cost

Enter fixed charges; your gas bill gives the Pence per Therm, Standing Charge and BTUs. The electricity bill gives the Pence/Unit and Quarterly Charge

Quarterly Charge numbers. Note that the gas BTU's per therm is hidden down at the bottom right of your gas bill.

To enter the Pence/Therm value, move the cursor to cell D5 and input the value (39.8). Enter the other values in the same way.

Entering the calculations

This is the 'engine room' of the spreadsheet and you need only enter five formulae. All of the formulae are entered using the ALT/F. Note that until you've entered a few meter readings you'll only get a small number result in these cells. The cells C14 and G14 calculate the number of weekly gas cubic feet and electricity units used from the meter readings by subtracting one week's reading from the previous week's. They are set up as follows: C14, ALT/F, B14-B13..(This week's gas reading minus last week's) G14, ALT/F, F14-F13. (ditto for the electricity meter)

Next – the formula for the gas costs. Enter it into cell D14 like this: **D14:=ALT/F...*(C14*D7/1000*I05/100)+I06/13.** The * (asterisk) is the multiply operator, and the / (slash) is the division operator. This formula calculates the cost of gas used in one week and adds to it the weekly standing charge as follows...

C14 (Weekly Cubic Feet Used) is multiplied by ID7 (the BTUs per Cubic Foot) the result is divided by 1000 to convert to Therms. The result is multiplied by ID5 (the cost per therm in pence). Divide this by 100 to give the cost per therm in pounds. Add to this ID6 (the quarterly standing charge) and divide by 13 to get the weekly charge.

Note the use of the "1" to denote a fixed reference cell. The use of the fixed reference becomes self-explanatory when we move into the data-entry section where 'relative' copies of cells are made.

Next, the formula for the electricity costs (Cell H14) calculates the weekly cost of electricity units used without the complication of involving a CuFt/Therms ratio as follows.

H14...ALT/E...(G14*!H5/100)+!H6/13

This works as follows ... **G14**(the Weekly units Used) Is multiplied by **I15** (the pence per unit). Added to the result is **I16** (the quarterly charge) and the lot is converted by 13 to obtain the weekly charge.

The final formula works out the weekly cost of gas and electricity. This goes into cell I14 and adds the weekly gas (in D14) and electricity bills (in H14) as follows.

I14..ALT/F...O14+H14

By the way, it's always a good idea to protect the work you've done by regularly saving it to disc. Mini Office provides a Save command, [ALT]/[I], which can be used to automatically save what you've created so far then bring you straight back to the sheet edit. Just like the Save and Continue function in LocoScript.

The important thing from now on is to make sure you take a regular weekly reading. Can I recommend that until you're in the habit of doing this, you take a reading whenever you remember – even daily – so that even if you forget to take the reading on the 'appointed' day, you can nevertheless work it out by subtraction from the day following or addition to the day before.

The first entry

Your first weeks' entries for the gas and electricity are starting values for the spreadsheet calculations. In the case of the example shown, week 52 is a dummy entry into row 13, cells B13,F1, that doesn't produce costs but simply sets up the calculations for the rest of the entries.

So, to make an input, we need only three entries as follows: 1) Enter the week number in Cell A13. 2) Enter the gas-meter reading in Cell B13. 3) Enter the electricity-meter reading in Cell F13. (In the example, the value entered was that of 70250).

One week later, you'll have three more readings to enter into row 14 just as you did in steps 1-3 above. After you enter the gas meter reading into cell B14 the spreadsheet will automatically work out the week's cost; likewise for the electricity meter reading entered into cell F14. The weekly total is also calculated at the same time.

Making weekly spreadsheet work for you

Before entering each following week's data, copy the latest row. For example, when it's time to enter the data for Week 2, firstly do a 'Relative Copy' of row 14 into row 15. Doing this saves time re-entering the formulae and the only change you need to make is to alter the week number from 1 to 2 and then enter the week 2 data (See diagram 3).

In detail, cursor to anywhere on row 13. Press the [COPY] key; you will then be asked to press R, C or S for a Row, Column or Single cell copy. Press [R]. Now the spreadsheet will make a relative copy of row 14 into row 15. Edit the week number from Week 1 to Week 2 by using the F7 Edit cell function. Now enter the two meter readings as you did above. Follow this method for each following week's entries. The values shown in the example spreadsheet are for a medium sized detached house with a family of three or four.

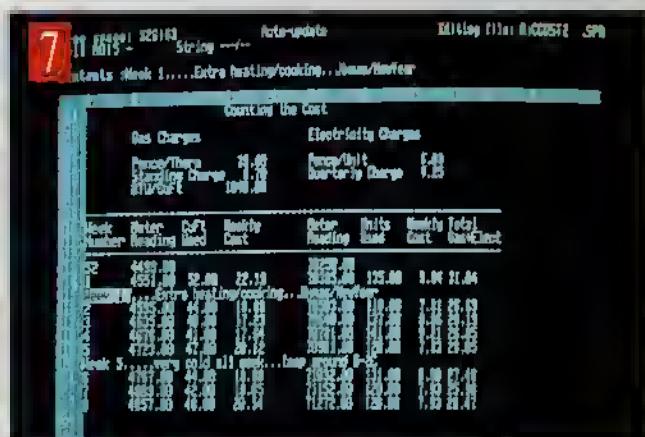
Having established the spreadsheet you can play around with the way structure it. Information can be entered as a text. For example, if the temperature was very low in week 5, do the following. First, position the cursor on the row under week 5. (If you've not entered week 6's data then skip the next step which inserts a row). Second, Press F8 and you will see that a new blank row will appear in between rows 5 and 6. Third, enter your comments ("... Week 5 ... very cold ... temp 0.2°C") using the [ALT]/[S] format - see screenshot 7.

House monitors

The effectiveness of double glazing or cavity wall insulation and the payback periods can be accurately judged using this simple spreadsheet. Extra power costs due to the addition of a dish washer would be reflected in the cost analysis. We can all save on power costs if we have some idea of where wastage is but don't get paranoid and start putting tape around the windows.



Digital gas and electricity meters (see insets) are easy to read; all you have to do is enter the figures into your Mini Office spreadsheet



A few weeks go by and the calculations are really adding up. Remember to take regular readings if you want to produce consistent results.

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If, like most people, you bought your Amstrad as a word processor, you are probably missing out on a lot of its potential. The one thing a PCW likes more than handling words is working out sums. So as the mortgage rate soars and the bank manager's letters become increasingly threatening, why not try using an accounting package to keep track of the finances and steer clear of disaster? Cashmaster is the latest in a string of offerings aimed at the small business or private individual.

The 14-page manual is written in a chatty style which at times verges on flippancy. It is marred by clumsy sentence constructions, grammatical errors and proof reading oversights, all of which combine to make it difficult to read. Despite this, it covers all the important topics.

The program will run on all PCWs and is compatible with the Cirtech Diamond hard disc, but the number of records in a file is limited by the size of the M drive. 512k machines can get 2200 entries in each file, while the 8256 is limited to between 1500 and 1700 (the manual is undecided on this point). Normally, files would cover a year so this is a minimum of six entries for every working day - sufficient for most small business or domestic uses.

The basis of Cashmaster is a ledger in which all financial transactions are entered. Each entry is marked with a class code and an account code to identify it for subsequent report production. In addition, selected entries can be tagged. Care is needed, however, in the selection of codes otherwise you won't get meaningful reports. There are 90 class codes and 30 account codes whose names can be selected and amended from a code menu.

Calculate to accumulate

The ledger will also show the amount of VAT included in each receipt or payment. There are good screen prompts and data entry is very simple. So too is data deletion which only requires one key stroke. But be warned: the careless caress of a finger on the [D] key could result in unintentional or even unnoticed loss of data and is potentially hazardous.

Ledgers can cover any period subject to the limit on the number of records. There is a search facility to help find entries in large ledgers. Although the obvious use of Cashmaster is to keep track of income and expenditure you can also have a separate ledger for budget forecasts. Cashmaster has a simple on-screen calculator which can be called up when required.

Reports are selected according to date, account and class. The choice lies between a detailed statement, VAT statement or profit and loss. Output can be to screen or printer. An ASCII file can be created if you want to incorporate the report in another document.

The program has several irritating features. There is no directory of data files so the name of each one has to be noted separately or else found from the disc directory in CP/M using DIR. Similarly when it comes to saving a file there is no default file name and you have to type it in each time. Prudent users who like to save data periodically whilst working on files will find there is no 'save and continue' option, only a 'save and exit' which means booting the program each time. The ledger will accept non-existent dates, for example 31st February.

Despite these shortcomings, the program is simple to use and provides a reasonable range of features, particularly for domestic use. The ease with which data can be deleted or amended will not appeal to accountants so think carefully before using Cashmaster for business use.

The closest rival to have been released recently is Money Manager PCW reviewed in September 1989. Money Manager PCW is more expensive and a little more difficult to use, but offers a wider range of features. Spreadsheet enthusiasts with Supercalc 2 won't find it too difficult to write something which will serve the same purpose as Cashmaster and do a lot of other things besides.

CASHMASTER FIGURES IT OUT

File: 8000+		** CASHMASTER ** Version 1.1 by D.M. Evans									
CASHMASTER A Intraset Ltd 1989		Read, Write, EXIT, Statements, Setup, Opt., Bag, List, Find, D, Edit, Insert, Delete, Pg Last, Pg First, Codes, Line: 1/ 40									
Class Codes											
1 Gas 6 Travel 11 Holiday 16 Clothing 21 Telephone 26 Bonuses											
2 Water	7 Entertain	12 Salarg	17 Children	22 Photograph	27						
3 Electric	8 Stationery	13 Car	18 Savings	23 Dining	28						
4 Insurance	9 Mortgage	14 TV	19 Salary	24 Field	29						
5 Postage	10 PELL Tax	15 Food	20 Dividends	25 Utility	30						
Date Item Cl Class Ac U/Receipt Payment VAT Element											
16/01/90 Mortgage		8 Mortgage	1/2		207.83						
31/01/90 Salary		12 Salarg	1/2	97.76							
31/01/90 Bonus		26 Bonuses	1/2	2,376.00							
30/02/90 Waitrose		15 Food	1/2		56.35						
15/03/90 Mortgage		9 Mortgage	1/2		207.83						
16/03/90 Cooker		24 Utility	1/2		276.00						

The main screen. The top box contains the prompts, the second can be toggled between account and class codes, and the remainder is the ledger. Note that non-existent dates (31st February and April) are accepted.

File: 8000+		** CASHMASTER ** Version 1.1 by D.M. Evans									
CASHMASTER A Intraset Ltd 1989		Read, Write, EXIT, Statements, Setup, Opt., Bag, List, Find, D, Edit, Insert, Delete, Pg Last, Pg First, Codes, Line: 1/ 40									
S											
\$											
total: \$											
0 - e / % 0 - to quit 0 - to reset operator: *											
Date Item Cl Class Ac U/Receipt Payment VAT Element											
16/01/90 Mortgage		8 Mortgage	1/2		207.83						
31/01/90 Salary		12 Salarg	1/2	97.76							
31/01/90 Bonus		26 Bonuses	1/2	2,376.00							
30/02/90 Waitrose		15 Food	1/2		56.35						
15/03/90 Mortgage		9 Mortgage	1/2		207.83						
16/03/90 Cooker		24 Utility	1/2		276.00						

The simple on-screen calculator in use - call it up and dismiss it whenever you need to!

File: 8000+		** CASHMASTER ** Version 1.1 by D.M. Evans									
CASHMASTER A Intraset Ltd 1989		Read, Write, EXIT, Statements, Setup, Opt., Bag, List, Find, D, Edit, Insert, Delete, Pg Last, Pg First, Codes, Line: 1/ 40									
Profit and Loss Statement											
Date From: (05/01/90) to End Date: (31/03/90) DMVWY Format											
Class No. From: (01) to (30)											
Account From: (01) to (35)											
List only Tagged Files: () V/N											
Date Item Cl Class Ac U/Receipt Payment VAT Element											
16/01/90 Mortgage		8 Mortgage	1/2		207.83						
31/01/90 Salary		12 Salarg	1/2	97.76							
31/01/90 Bonus		26 Bonuses	1/2	2,376.00							
30/02/90 Waitrose		15 Food	1/2		56.35						
15/03/90 Mortgage		9 Mortgage	1/2		207.83						

Setting up a profit and loss statement with Cashmaster. To incorporate this report into another document, simply create an ASCII file and import it wherever necessary.

CASHMASTER

Pluses

- ▲ Good for beginners
- ▲ Easy to use
- ▲ Satisfactory for domestic use

Minuses

- ▼ Manual badly written
- ▼ Easy to delete data by mistake
- ▼ Lacks useful features available in comparable programs

EASE OF USE 4/5

PERFORMANCE 4/5

RANGE OF FEATURES 3/5

DOCUMENTATION 2/5

VALUE FOR MONEY 13/20

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The Computer Football Pools Predictor

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The result of many years research into the football pools by the programmer Martin Evans of C.C.S., the program is a masterpiece of expertise, and is simplicity itself to use.

• Predicts Home, Away and Draws

• No daily typing in of team names etc and no redundant databases

• Instant read-out or Hardcopy if you have a printer

• Uses scientific formulae based on recent form home and away, league position, goals scored etc. It has long been realised that certain combinations of these factors return a much higher than average of draws than the laws of average would expect. POOLSMMASTER looks for these factors and analyses their significance to give you the best possible chance of a win.

• Also has a "Sequence Predictor" option. Many people believe that certain numbers on the coupon come up more often than others, and over a season patterns do seem to develop. The program analyses these patterns and predicts the numbers most likely to come up next. Certainly more scientific than marking a pin in, or trying out odds.

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THE GRAPHOLOGIST

This program is a must for anyone interested in analysing their handwriting, or analysing other peoples. It is also very useful for analysing prospective employees' handwriting. To use the program, a sample of handwriting is obtained, preferably in ink. From the main menu of the program you will be prompted and guided to examine each detail of the sample. You will then be asked again deeper and deeper sets of sub menus, all prompting you for relevant details of the writing, and the points to watch for, and add to the file if applicable.

Upon completion you are left with a disk file up to 15 pages long (depending on the depth of detail you choose), this file can then be edited within your word processor to produce a full report for the viewer.

Fully experienced Graphologists can charge almost what they like for a full analysis, so this could prove a very lucrative business venture for you. We must however stress, that unless you are experienced in graphology, then we can in no way guarantee the accuracy of the information that the program provides. If you are an enthusiastic amateur or just curious, then this program could provide hours of entertainment, whilst teaching you the finer art of this fascinating subject.

The text within THE GRAPHOLOGIST was researched and written by a top London graphologist/psychologist James Woodward. The software was written by Martin Evans our consultant software writer.

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CASHMASTER

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- Profit & Loss Statements (Selected accounts & class totals)
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WE APOLOGISE TO ALL OTHER SOFTWARE WRITERS AND TO ANYONE ELSE WHO HAS BOUGHT THE OTHER SO CALLED EASY TO USE PROGRAMS. CASHMASTER REALLY DOES BLOW THE UD OUT COMPUTERISED ACCOUNTING.

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LOOK, NO HANDS!

David Gregg shows you how to devise some automatic applications in BASIC - indispensable for both you and your PCW

My opinion has always been that computers should work for you. They should give you more time to play with, by relieving you of mindlessly tedious or horribly intricate tasks, while you go away and do something far more interesting or important. In my capacity as an administrator, for example, I am responsible for organising the daily activities of a large group of people. I would like to be able to go to my computer and ask it to find out when, in the coming month, 20 of them, say, all have the same afternoon free so that I can plan a meeting; I might also want to update their diaries so that they can't

This is provided with the help of one quickly-produced masterfile (which consists of the individuals' names and their daily marks) which I would have had to have written on paper anyway. It sorts out and maintains the marks of another thirty individuals (or as many as I need for that matter) and does the rest of my paper work as an added bonus.

It would be nice as well, wouldn't it, to be able to give a computer a long list of varying jobs to do, like those above, with a variety of different software, and then just pat it on the monitor and depart?

The good news is that it doesn't have to be a pipe-dream. It's actually perfectly possible to achieve, and with simple Mallard BASIC too!

It was needs like those outlined above that led me to start learning how to write my own programs. Beasts like those I've just described – especially those of the run-over-night variety, just couldn't be located for the PCW for love nor money. Furthermore, I discovered that writing programs, contrary to popular belief, can be a very pleasant, engrossing and fulfilling activity.

Elementary, my dear Mallard

I used to play chess and do crosswords. The mental activity involved is very similar but, at the end of the day, you don't have anything permanent to show for it! If you write a program, it's for life (well almost!) You can use it again and again, and the hours you spend developing it are rapidly recouped as it saves you time, money and, occasionally, sleep.

This article will attempt to show you, in everyday words, how to use your PCW with easy Mallard BASIC commands and functions to build up friendly, personalised software that will do exactly what you want it to do in the way you want it done; since the majority of PCW owners are concerned with words, it will be orientated, primarily, to handling text and simple numbers. No mathematical equations or hexadecimals will appear here – and that's a promise!

It is, however, going to require you to be familiar with enough elementary BASIC to be able to load the language, type in, save and run a program and to have, hopefully, come across FOR...NEXT and WHILE ...WEND loops, array variables and strings; I will try, however, to make their use clear as I go along.

Those of you who are already experienced programmers in BASIC, will doubtless find the style in which much of my code is written too long-winded and wasteful of space; please remember, however, that this is a series aimed at showing virtual beginners what is possible. It's not a master-class. Extract any ideas of interest and then rewrite the code as densely as you like!

double book themselves at a later date. Then I would like the machine to send them a short printed memorandum with a confirmation of the date and time of the proposed meeting, and append a dictated message. I don't necessarily want to sit there, however, almost chained to my PCW's keyboard while the machine does all the searching and printing.

Likewise, I regularly need to send other reminders out to varying numbers of people every week of that familiar "Please do this ..." and "Don't forget that ..." variety. I would like to be able to come home late of an evening and tell the computer to send a series of such messages, and, in the event of any individual requiring more than one message, to put these all together on a single sheet of paper in order to save trees.

Ideally, I would then like to go to bed, leave the machine, and collect the copies for distribution the following morning on the way out to work. This is massively cheaper than photocopying, especially for short messages, and the computer will even include the recipients' names, provided you show it how to.

Programmable automation

As a teacher, I might want an electronic markbook. It must allow me to enter a whole group's marks straight onto a single word processor style 'page' at one go, so that it can then go on to automatically assign them to the file for each individual student, total up all their marks to date and print a report on their progress; while this is in progress, I can be busy preparing for the following day.

Just a memo

For the time being, I am going to show you the very simple, central core of a program that will allow you to produce a run of identical printed memos (detailing the time and agenda of your next committee meeting, for example, or the list of rehearsals for a play) and head each one up with the name of the person to whom you want it to be sent. This first version will only allow you to send one message at a time. That will be enough for many of you, as novice programmers, to digest in one session. We'll look at ways to handle multiple messages in another article.

However, I will conclude this month by suggesting how even this simple piece of software can be run automatically over and over again through the night without you having to be there to give it fresh instructions.

Assuming then that you know how to load BASIC and type in a listing (have a read of the 8000 Plus Listings pages if not) then here is the code, a few lines at a time, with explanations (which of course you don't type in!) which should help you follow how it works.

First the program needs two files (a list of names and the memo itself) to be on the disc already and in ASCII format (plain text, without printer control codes). You can write them in LocoScript and save them as ASCII or use RPED.BAS without leaving Mallard BASIC.

Name-dropping

Your list of names (I'll call mine PLUSTEAM.NAM with frightening originality) might look like this:

SHARON BRADLEY

TIM SMITH

JULIE BARNES

SOPHIE LANKENAU

PAUL MORGAN

and so on. You don't have to do it in capital letters, it's just a matter of taste on the final printout. Meanwhile, our message to them (saved as PLUSTEAM.MEM) might be:

If you lot don't agree to work another sixty hours a week

without extra pay then you're all fired!

Yours sincerely

FUTURE PUBLISHING

You can have (within practical reason) as many names on your list as you like and as many lines of message. The RPED editor will handle up to 200. What these numbers will affect is the size of space which the computer has to reserve in its memory in order to store them. We need to tell it this in the program as soon as possible and so I'm going to add another line at the very beginning:

```
05 DIM name$(200),memo$(200)
```

This will reserve 200 spaces for each. You can adjust this if you like.

Now the program needs to ask the user for the information (the names of the two ASCII files) that it requires in order to run. In keeping with our philosophy of being as divorced from the keyboard as possible, it's going to ask for everything it needs straight-off and run while you go away.

```
10 INPUT "Filename of MAILING LIST please -  
",namelist$
```

```
20 INPUT "Filename of MEMO you wish to send them  
please - ",memofile$
```

The commas following the question and before the variable names (namelist\$ and memofile\$) suppress the normal question mark. Notice also that I've named the variables, which hold the information about the two files the program will load, so that I can remember what they actually do.

Load 'em up and move 'em out

The program then instructs the machine to load these files from the disc (which we'll assume is in the default drive):

```
30 OPEN "I",1,namelist$  
40 names%=0  
50 WHILE NOT EOF(1)  
60 names%=names%+1  
70 INPUT #1,name$(name%)  
80 WEND  
90 CLOSE #1
```

This loads the names. Notice the use of the variable names% to count the number read in. We'll need this later. The same procedure is used for the other file; notice how the names of the variables change but the method is identical.

```
100 OPEN "I",1,memofile$  
110 lines=0  
120 WHILE NOT EOF(1)  
130 lines=lines+1  
140 INPUT #1,memofile$(lines)  
150 WEND  
160 CLOSE #1
```

Now they're in the memory and all we need to do is tell the machine to work through the list of names and print out the memo for each one. The LPRINT statements below – without any text – merely insert blank lines between name and memo, and at the end of each one, to allow you to cut them up more easily afterwards.

```
170 FOR x=1 TO name%  
180 LPRINT name$(x)  
190 LPRINT:LPRINT  
200 FOR y=1 TO lines  
210 LPRINT memo$(y)  
220 NEXT y  
230 LPRINT:LPRINT:LPRINT  
240 NEXT x  
250 END
```

That's it! Couldn't be much simpler could it? Clearly there is a lot of scope for making this program prettier and more flexible, but BASIC buffs can do that for themselves; the novice doesn't want that degree of complexity yet.

Prepare to be amazed

However, I will now introduce a fundamentally new idea which we can use even with this easy program to transform it into something much more interesting.

Save this version of the program and then change some of the lines (using EDIT line number) as follows:

```
10 INPUT #3,namelist$  
20 INPUT #3,memofile$  
250 WEND:CLOSE #3:END
```

and add the lines:

```
06 OPEN "I",#3,"autofile.mem"  
07 WHILE NOT EOF(3)
```

Now save this version of the program under a different name and go back into your text editor. Create and save a new ASCII file into which you put the names of the two files you've used so far. Call the new file AUTOFILE.MEM. Here's mine as above:

```
PLUSTEAM.NAM  
PLUSTEAM.MEM
```

Notice how I've tagged them with .NAM for the list of names and .MEM for the memo. It will help when you've got a lot on a disc later on. Put the name file first and then the memo.

Once out of the editor and back in BASIC type RUN "MEMOPROG", or whatever you've called the second version with the three changes, and sit back in amazement as the whole program loads and runs itself and then stops without you touching another key! (assuming you've typed it all in properly, that is!) It is also a good idea to set up your printer to use continuous stationery (see margin note). Better still, if you now write a few more messages and lists of names, you can make the program run them one after another without stopping, simply by altering AUTOFILE.MEM, for example:

```
PLUSTEAM.NAM  
PLUSTEAM.MEM  
GERBILS.NAM  
GERBILS.MEM
```

and so on. Be very careful to keep the name and memo files in the same order

Automatic feeding too!

With programs of this sort that do a lot of printing, it is much better to use continuous stationery or you will be stuck there feeding new sheets in the whole time! You can do this when you boot up CP/M by:

- i) having PAPER.COM on your boot disc (from side 2 of your master discs) and
- ii) including the command PAPER 11 in your PROFILE.SUB file for 11" stationery or PAPER C.F 44 for A4 continuous.

The complete works

You don't have to type in the extra spaces I have inserted between the line numbers and the program lines. They are to show you the various loops more clearly. You should of course preserve all the other ones.

```
05 DIM name$(200),memo$(200)  
06 OPEN "I",3,"autofile.mem"  
07 WHILE NOT EOF(3)  
10 INPUT #3,namelist$  
20 INPUT #3,memofile$  
30 OPEN "I",1,namelist$  
40 names=0  
50 WHILE NOT EOF(1)  
60 names=names+1  
70 INPUT #1,name$(names)  
80 WEND  
90 CLOSE #1  
100 OPEN "I",1,memofile$  
110 lines=0  
120 WHILE NOT EOF(1)
```

```
130 lines=lines+1  
140 INPUT #1,memo$(lines)  
150 WEND  
160 CLOSE #1  
170 FOR x=1 TO names  
180 LPRINT name$(x)  
190 LPRINT:LPRINT  
200 FOR y=1 TO lines  
210 LPRINT memo$(y)  
220 NEXT y  
230 LPRINT:LPRINT:LPRINT  
240 NEXT x  
250 WEND:CLOSE #3:END
```

• Remember that this program requires a properly set up Autofile.mem to run!

SOPHIE LANKENAU

If you lot don't agree to work another sixty hours a week without extra pay then you're all fired!
Yours sincerely
FUTURE PUBLISHING

The end product, a memo which prints out by itself and to which you can add more names and more files as you wish

SEARCH PARTY

Andrew Bibby turns very nosy, and shows you how to mind everybody else's business - without getting arrested

I still remember one of my early journalistic assignments, which sent me scurrying to the dingy reading room of Companies House in London's City Road to get the dirt on a particularly unpleasant property developer. What I needed was information on the company's shareholders and directors - details which were publicly available in the documents that the company had filed with Companies House. Getting into central London and then to City Road, took time but I eventually handed in my order form, paid the search fee (memory tails, but I think it was fivepence), and settled down to await the arrival of the company's documents, reproduced at 1/24th size on a microfiche. After that it was simply a case of waiting for a microfiche reading machine to become available - and getting my notebook ready.

Oh, how much simpler things are these days. Of course,

it's still possible to pop into the Companies House search room in the City Road, or visit the headquarters of Companies House in Cardiff - though the fee for a search has now gone up to £2.50 (see margin note).

But it's equally possible to get up-to-date company information scrolling up on the screen of your PCW without leaving your home or office.

Of course, you will need to be equipped with a modem and interface, as well as with adequate comms software - and you'll have to move the PCW if it's not already handily placed near a phone socket. But once you've done this, your computer will have the power to carry on conversations with other computers elsewhere, and to access the growing number of on-line information sources available.

Companies House itself does not have an official on-line database service, but several commercial companies have stepped into the gap and by combing through the public records have compiled their own very comprehensive information databases about British limited companies. There are, in fact, over a million actively trading limited companies in England and Wales alone. Many others are registered in Scotland, and there are some more which have been registered but which are currently dormant.

Eavesdropping

WES Engineering Services is a medium-sized firm of mechanical engineers based in Luton who have been using on-line company searches for about the last 18 months.

The idea came from their Company Secretary, Martin Edwards, who as an individual computer user had discovered what was available. "I got Telecom Gold myself, came across the database services, and found they were very interesting and useful", he says.

His company currently undertakes on-line searches about two or three times a week, typically to check the creditworthiness of customers. The ICC database is the normal choice, although Infocheck has also been used on occasions, and Martin Edwards says he has found both straightforward to use. "ICC is quite simple, and it's easy to train other people to use it", he explains. Nowadays, he delegates most of the searching to members of his staff - though he says he still sometimes goes on-line

himself if he's particularly interested in the potential findings.

As well as assessing the credit status of customers, WES Engineering have found another use for company searches. "It comes in handy for keeping a check on our competitors", says Martin Edwards. "We can find out what sort of profit margins they have, details on turnover, number of employees and so on. This information wasn't readily available to us before."

WES Engineering haven't gone overboard in their use of on-line databases, and Martin Edwards cheerfully agrees that they're not absolutely essential. "It wouldn't be something we couldn't live without," he says.

But nevertheless, it could be innovations like this which give companies like his the all-important competitive edge over their rivals. After all, good management does depend on good information.

Lining up

If you're going to go on-line, you should plan carefully beforehand exactly what you're going to do as this will save those pennies and pounds clocking up mercilessly. Telecom Gold run an telephone advice line on 0422 237777.

They will talk you through the various stages of an on-line search and will advise you what the current surcharge prices are. At time of writing, Infocheck's charge via Gold is £3.30 per minute or part-minute, compared with £2.75 for ICC and Jordans. (All prices are excluding VAT, and excluding ordinary Telecom Gold charges). You might also choose to read the detailed help files on each database provided on Telecom Gold (you can access these without paying the search premium

charges). Again, it makes sense to save the files to disk for later use. Some relevant commands at the Telecom Gold '>' prompt are:

- > INFO INFOCHECK INTRO
- > INFO ICC COSEARCH
- > INFO JORDANS INTRO

Of course, you don't need to use Telecom Gold as the host service. Each of these databases can be reached using other host services, or by direct access. For full details contact the companies by telephone on: Infocheck 071 377 8872, Jordans 071 253 3030, ICC 081 783 1122 (all numbers 01 before May 8th).

You can also undertake on-line company searches on Prestel, again using Infocheck. Prestel users will find full details on page 34310.

Searching questions

You don't need to be a budding investigative journalist to know that information on companies can be extremely useful. If you're in business, for example, you'll be aware of the importance of being properly briefed on the legal status of the companies with whom you're involved.

For example, you wouldn't want to offer trade credit to that new customer of yours, Delboy Trotter (Moonlight Flitters) Ltd, without making sure that, at the very least, you've got their full legal name right, and that you know the address of their registered office. (Without these details, you'll have much more of a problem if you have to sue them through the courts later for non-payment).

Alternatively, you might want to run a check on their creditworthiness at the very start of your business dealings - and perhaps get confirmation of exactly how long they've been trading.

But you might also want to check the company records of some of your competitors - to compare your own performance against theirs, maybe, or to weigh up the chances of making a successful takeover bid.

If you're a newcomer to business, too, you may find that you can extract useful information for your own business plan by examining the financial records of other companies already trading.

Blessing the host

So, how do you start? You can subscribe direct to the databases of your choice, but the most common way for individual computer users and small businesses to go on-line is via a host service.

For example, Telecom Gold, as well as offering an electronic mail facility, also acts as host to about 16 business databases, including the company information services run by Infocheck, Jordans and ICC. Each of these databases will offer you basic information on limited companies - the registered office address and company registration number, for instance. But as we shall see, they

can each be used in much more sophisticated ways, too.

Let's take an example. Let's suppose John Baggett runs a paper-bag and cardboard box business. Out of the blue he receives a phone call, apparently from a computer manufacturer, wanting to discuss a large order of boxes for a new product.

Baggett thinks it all sounds rather tishy. That computer chappie's surname, for example... could anyone really have the name of Sugar? And, as for the company's name, it sounded more like the sort of made-up name you get in science fiction novels.

Baggett decides to check it out. His business gets by with an old manual Remington, but fortunately his next-door neighbour, Mike Crowe-Chipp, is into all this new-tech stuff, and offers to help.

Mike calls up Telecom Gold, logs on in the usual way with his ID number and password, and then types **BUSINESS** at the > prompt. He's presented with the current list of business databases available through Telecom Gold.

Saving graces

Mike elects to use Infocheck for this particular search, though ICC or Jordans (see Lining up) would have been equally possible. He's immediately reminded on screen of the extra cost involved, with the following message:

Additional charges for the Infocheck database are 330p per minute, except for Registered Office which is 100p per minute

This may seem a lot, but Mike knows that he should be able to extract the information he needs very quickly – probably within two or three minutes. The secret is not to read the information provided at the time, and certainly not to print it out whilst on-line: instead everything should be captured in a file and saved to disc, so that it can be read at leisure later.

Infocheck now offers a menu of alternatives:

- F Full Report**
- C Company Profile – full report without credit rating**
- S Snapshot – précis of company report**
- R Registered Office**
- D Document Ordering**
- I Help Information on Infocheck**
- O Quit**
- Enter option:**

The full Company Report is available for about 100,000 larger companies. Each report includes all the details available from Companies House records as well as Infocheck's own full financial analysis of the published accounts. For client reference there is also an assessment of

the company's creditworthiness.

Alternatively, you can choose the Company Profile option (full report but without the credit rating), or a shorter summary (Snapshot). Infocheck also offer an off-line company search facility, using the Document Ordering option.

Mike decides to select the Snapshot option, and types in [S]. Telecom Gold then tells him:

You may record your session in a file.

Please enter :

Y (Request prompt for file name)

N or [RETURN] (No record. Enter INFOCHECK)

Q (Quit without entering INFOCHECK)

Enter [Y] [N] or [Q] :

This is tricky: Mike is certainly going to save his findings in a file – but on his own disc, not on Telecom Gold's computer (for which an extra charge will be made). So he types [N]. He then immediately uses his comms software to open a file on the disc already formatted in his PCW's disc drive. (Let's assume he names the file **COMPANY.EG**).

At last Telecom Gold makes contact with Infocheck's database – and the £3.30 a minute surcharge begins. Mike is prompted to enter the name or registered number of the company he is interested in: he types in **AMSTRAD**.

But there are in fact four companies with the seven letters AMSTRAD in their title – as Infocheck points out:

Matches found are:-

Company Name Status —————— 00666369

AMSTRAD DISTRIBUTION LIMITED Full data 02035558

A.M.S. TRADING SERVICES LIMITED Full data 00942631

AMSTRAD PUBLIC LIMITED COMPANY Full data 01991007

AMSTRAD UK LIMITED Basic Data

The name search for AMSTRAD has revealed 4 matches

Company Number/Name (return to exit):

Mike decides to plump for what he expects to be the holding company for the Amstrad group: Amstrad plc. Moments later the report appears on screen (see Sugar content below).

Once the search is over, Mike immediately closes the file he's opened, logs off Telecom Gold, and then calls up CP/M. Using PIP he can send his new file direct to the printer: the correct way to do this is to enter

LST:=A:COMPANY.EG.

John Baggett goes away clutching the hard copy, but wearing a frown – if Amstrad really wants his boxes, will his old manual typewriter be able to cope with all the invoicing?

Sugar content

Prepared by INFOCHECK

Date: 27.3.90 Client No: 754 Report Prepared: 22.03.90

COMPANY STATUS REPORT DN AMSTRAD PUBLIC LIMITED COMPANY

Public Company

Date of Incorp.: 19.11.1968

Company No.: 00942631

Main Objects: design, manufacture and distribution of electronic and micro computing products.

Registered Office: BRENTWOOD HOUSE, 169 KINGS ROAD, BRENTWOOD, ESSEX, CM14 4EF

Trading Address: N.O. BRENTWOOD HOUSE, 169 KINGS ROAD, BRENTWOOD, ESSEX, CM14 4EF

Trading Phone No.: 0277 228888

Bankers are: Lloyds Bank plc, 72 Lombard St, London, EC3P 3BT

The Company's latest filed accounts are for the year ended 30.06.89. We would recommend advancing credit on normal terms to this Company. All contracts may be considered.

Industry Type: Electronics

Latest Accounts for 12 Months ending: 30.06.89

Previous Accounts for 12 Months ending: 30.06.88

	Latest	Previous	Previous	Previous
	#M	#M	#M	#M
Turnover	626.32	625.43	511.80	304.15
Profit Before Tax	76.61	160.41	135.71	75.28
Current Assets	502.14	453.83	271.84	141.68
Total Assets	591.52	478.42	284.72	149.28
Current Liabilities	276.79	222.23	105.20	81.18
Shareholders Funds	310.81	256.18	179.52	88.10
Long Term Liabilities	3.92	0.00	0.00	0.00
Debtors	100.43	130.63	54.81	38.33
Creditors	37.48	10.34	8.45	4.59
Liquidity Ratio	0.63	1.49	1.67	1.77
Collection Period (days)	58.52	76.23	39.08	45.99
Stock / Turnover	1.92	5.12	5.34	9.13
Creditor Days (days)	21.84	6.03	6.02	5.50
Solvency Ratio (%)	52.54	53.54	63.05	59.01
Gearing (%)	22.66	27.55	7.44	3.74

Postal order

If you can afford to wait a few days, Companies House operate a postal search service for £4. The microfiche of the company you're interested in will be posted to you, normally within 3 working days. Most public libraries have microfiche readers if you haven't got immediate access to one.

Full details from the Postal Search Section, Companies House, Crown Way, Cardiff CF4 3UZ, or phone 0222 380107/380108.

SPEAKEASY

Brian Holley speculates on how to adapt his PCW to produce the perfect tool for running a business



Holley the reluctant oracle, "Go on, ask me a question"

The expression that clouded the face of my doctor when I saw him in the car park recently remains clearly in my mind. I made the mistake of accosting him with "Ah! Just the man I want to see." His expression turned first to relief then to pleasure when I told him that the treatment he had inflicted on my knee had been highly successful and thanked him for his efforts.

I know how he felt as those first words of mine fell on his ears. Having myself been described, often wrongly, as an 'expert', I find that it is as if I were wearing a sign bearing the words 'Go on, ask me a question.' There is an automatic desire to run for cover the moment someone says "Ah! You're the computer man aren't you?"

A newcomer to the corner of the

County Council offices which I inhabit was introduced to me the other day. Within seconds he was uttering "Ah!" and asking if he could come and talk "computers". Even friends chance the future of our relationship by pressing me with convoluted computer problems from time to time.

I don't actually mind. Some of them are in business for themselves and have few resources that are free and available when they are not up to their eyeballs in turning the next honest coin.

It struck me what a massive investment of time and money computerisation is. This realisation was forced home in my office when I down-loaded a file from our mainframe computer. I asked the system to tell me how much it had cost to select the records I wanted, create the file and send it to me via Kermit (which is a form of communications software and not the frog). The answer was £48 which amounted to one pound per second of computer time. "Was this value for money?" I asked myself, comparing it with the cost of generating files on my PCW.

We've only just begun

I then tried to put myself in the position of some of my self-employed friends. I was aware that some of them had imagined that buying a personal computer was the solution to the time and money problem. Little did they realise just how many other problems it would create.

Buying the computer is not an end in itself, but a beginning. It's the beginning of a long, and hopefully fruitful, learning period and an even longer period of investment.

Often the PCW is purchased because it is the cheapest machine, for range of features it presents, on the market. This is not a good reason for buying a particular computer, but fortunately the PCW has a long pedigree. Therefore the operating system, though slow, is thoroughly reliable and there is a mountain of good quality, tried and tested software to run on it.

If I had bought my PCW 8256 to run a business, I wondered, how would I plan an investment program to give me a tool that would maximise the generation of business

and minimise the hassle of computing? This is the solution that I came up with.

Just one more thing

I think my first investment would have to be a decent printer. With all the sophisticated paperwork that pours through letter boxes these days, I think the quality of the Amstrad printer may create the wrong impression. The difficulty is, should I go for a daisy wheel machine or a 24 pin dot matrix? This could only be decided when the principle usage of the machine was established - whether it was to be devoted to the production of letters which would point toward the daisywheel, or whether it would be used to present information in graphs or diagrams - which would definitely mean that a dot matrix printer was required and a 24 pin one for maximum quality.

"Time is money," so they say (whoever 'they' might be). Therefore, any device which purports that it is going to save time, at least considerable chunks of it, is going to pay for itself eventually. So next I'd be inclined to invest in more memory. I upgraded my 8256 to 512K two years ago and never regretted the fifty pounds and two hours sweat it cost me. However, now there is the SCA 512K upgrade that just clips on the back of the computer. There's no sweat required to install this little gem, but there might be to find the hundred and forty pounds or so to buy it.

Flippin' marvellous

Along with this would come Flpper from Software Imperative. With the memory expansion this is a real time saver, simulating what is known among the 16 bit fraternity as multi-tasking. Of course, it's not actually doing more than one job at a time, but enables the operator to switch between activities without having to quit and reload software all the time. This would let me take a quick peek at my spreadsheet to be sure that I knew how much money I should be asking my publisher for in the letter I'm writing.

Good quality software is essential in businesses. Cutting corners here could be disastrous. One firm I heard of had purchased a cheap database. When they had input the maximum number of records the system locked up and refused to let them retrieve anything.

To my mind, a good database should allow me lots of fields and lots of records. It should be possible to change the fields and screen layout easily. I want to be able to hold more than one database on a single disc and must be able to output to and import from ASCII files. Oh yes, and it has to have a crystal clear manual that hardly needs to be referred to because the system is so logical. If you know to which system I refer, do please write and give me the name of it.

A spreadsheet will probably serve my purposes better than special accounting software. This is because, if you haven't already noticed, I like to change my mind. I think I might feel rather constrained by using a system which is someone else's idea of how I should conduct my financial affairs. Again, this is a highly idiosyncratic view and not a recommendation for company policy.

With the range of products now available for the PCW it's not a bad investment for a business at all. Perhaps I should start one.

FLIPPER 2 PLUS

and expanded

memory:

now you can

have your cake

and eat it.

FLIPPER 2 was quite an unusual program. It could split your PCW's memory in two, letting you run LocoScript 2 in one half and a CP/M program in the other. Or it could let you load two CP/M programs at once, one in each half. It could even tackle tricky programs like Mini Office and LocoFile. Best of all it could FLIP you from one half to the other in as little as two seconds, any time you wanted. And it wouldn't lose your place.

Things have changed since we launched **FLIPPER 2**. Now you can buy an SCA or Isenstein Ram add-on and double your PCW's memory size at a stroke. That's why we've brought out **FLIPPER 2 PLUS**. This still gives you all **FLIPPER 2**'s

memory-splitting power, but it can handle extra memory as well. This means that, with an SCA or Isenstein 512K add-on fitted, **FLIPPER 2 PLUS** can cram two (very nearly) full-size 8512s or 9512s into one machine. You'll be able to load all your LocoScript 2 add-ons and dictionaries on one side of the machine, and still have room for a hefty CP/M set-up on the other. With power like that on offer, why compromise?

Please send me **FLIPPER 2 PLUS** for my:

8512 9512 Expanded 8256

I enclose a cheque/postal order for £29.95
 I enclose my FLIPPER/FLIPPER 2 masterdisk and a cheque/postal order for £5.00

(Price includes UK postage and packing, and VAT. Please make all cheques payable to Software Imperative. Sorry, FLIPPER does not run on an unexpanded 8256.)

Name

Address

..... Postcode

Mail this coupon to: Software Imperative, 11 Chapel Row,
Queen Square, Bath, Avon, BA1 1HN

FLIPPER 2 PLUS: still only £29.95.

Software Imperative, 11 Chapel Row, Queen Square, Bath, Avon, BA1 1HN, proprietor A.J.Wilson, tel (0225) 425315. PCW is a trademark of Amstrad plc, CP/M is a trademark of Digital Research, LocoScript and LocoFile are trademarks of Locomotive Software, Mini Office is a trademark of Database Software, Isenstein is a trademark of Isenstein Computer Systems.



A GOOD COVER STORY?

...Now to the main point of my writing. Do any of the staff at 8000 Plus or its doubtless billions of readers know of a company that manufactures or sells dust covers for the printer of the PCW 9512 with the cut sheet feeder in situ?

I have scoured all my local computer shops and they are unable to come up with the goods. I have regularly examined the pages of 8000 Plus and do not recall ever seeing the ASF unit mentioned in the same sentence as dust covers. I have written to several companies and have either drawn a blank or have simply been sent their unsatisfactory standard leaflets. I have even, in desperation, turned to the pages of other magazines, but never again!

I am sure that there are suitable dust covers around, so please would those involved let us know about them. There are, after all, many sheet feeders around and plenty of owners who wish to protect their equipment.

I look forward to ceremoniously discarding the tea-towel that I currently use.

Roger Hall
Norwich

8000 Plus: Not knowing of any such dust cover ourselves, we've just spoken to Nick Hewer at Micheal Joyce Consultants who has told us that as far as he is aware no such product is as yet in existence. So, unless anybody knows otherwise (letters into Postscript please), don't shred your tea-towel just yet!

AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE TEA TOWEL

- A three piece set of covers specially designed for your PCW keyboard, monitor and printer. Sets now available for the PCW 9512 fitted with cut sheet feeder.
- Manufactured from top quality tear proof water resistant nylon fabric coated with tough polyurethane and treated with an anti static inhibitor.
- Seams are stitched with strong polyester thread and feature colour coordinated piping. They do the job and they look good.
- A matching set of covers will protect your PCW hardware from dust, scrapes, accidental spills and unauthorised use.
- It makes sense to protect what you value.

Please send me a set of covers for my:

8256/8512

£11.95

9512

£12.95

9512 with sheet feeder

£13.95

I enclose a cheque/PO for £.....

Name.....

Address.....

.....Postcode.....

Send to: **Hamilton Business Systems**

38 Green Lane

Hounslow

London TW4 6JF

Tel: 01-577 0098 Fax: 01-572 1481

Note: Prices include VAT and UK postage

THE CHRONICLERS

Sophie Lankenau goes to London to visit the offices of *The Jewish Chronicle* – one national weekly newspaper that is determined not to pass over the opportunity of the PCW



It's official - 48,346 people buy The Jewish Chronicle every week



Editor Geoffrey Paul tells us about the kind of monopoly you cannot play at home.

The Jewish Chronicle survived 148 years without the Amstrad PCW. But the installation of a 20 strong task-force of both 8512s and 9512s two years ago, has proved without question that patience is a virtue, and the PCW a grace. Every week, a team of 30 editorial staff and their PCWs take *The Jewish Chronicle*, the leading title for the UK's Jewish community, closer to its 150th anniversary.

This is no mean feat for either the machines or the manpower involved. The publication is packed with information, from the home, foreign and regional news pages, to a plethora of specialist sections including arts and culture, a youth update and book reviews to name a few.

Approximately 50,000 copies hit the shelves of newsagents every Friday – at about the same time as the Chronicle team are in the middle of producing the next week's issue. In 1988, with the newspaper's resources (namely typewriters) being put under constant pressure by an increasing workload and an expanding staff, computerisation was a logical solution. Editor Geoffrey Paul recalls the introduction of the PCW.

"The youngsters were ready for anything" he says, "but the older members of staff were more word processor resistant. The

8512 is a very friendly machine, and easy to learn. I chose it instead of the 9512 because I prefer the flexibility which double disc drives offer. And, of course, the printer isn't so noisy! I also have an 8512 at home, which my 11 year old son has taken over to do his homework on. He learned how to use it overnight, and is always showing me new aspects of the machine which he has picked up on the way. There is always a fight over who gets to use it first!"

Since the introduction of the PCW to the newspaper, many of the editorial staff on *The Jewish Chronicle* have also purchased their own machines, enabling them to work quite comfortably at home out of office hours. As Geoffrey Paul explained, "That is the beauty of the machine. If I need to work at home, I just whip the disc out and take it with me – it is so simple and convenient".

Vote of confidence

The writing staff at *The Jewish Chronicle* have universally adopted LocoScript 2 with its Spellchecker to produce the newspaper's text. As assistant Foreign News Editor Joe Millis explains, the program is ideal as a 'journalist's tool'. He receives the bulk of the text for the overseas news pages from the paper's foreign correspondents by fax – hand or type-written – and by electronic mail direct from Israel. It's then a question of booting up his PCW with LocoScript 2 and keying in the various contributions – making further changes where necessary. He then saves them on his working disc. In such a way is the text prepared for the finished page.

Joe has produced two templates, one for each of

Let bylines be your lines

Most journalists at *The Jewish Chronicle* are English literature graduates. Potential employees, however, are unlikely to be fresh from college. A background in local journalism is desirable, and the ideal candidate will probably come to the Chronicle as a second or third job. If you are interested in becoming a writer for a newspaper, The National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ) runs several courses to prepare potential hacks for employment. For further details, write to: NCTJ, Carlton House, Hemnal Street, Epping, Essex, CM16 4NL

All in a week's work

The production schedule is hectic on a weekly publication. Whereas the 8000 Plus team have a whole month to gather news, plan and write features, and insert all the types which you look forward to so much, there is little breathing space on *The Jewish Chronicle*.

Joe Millis explains. "The paper goes to press on Wednesday evening; Thursday and Friday are 'lighter days', when the longer pieces such as features are put together. The news pages are tackled on Monday and Tuesday, and then it's a mad rush on Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday morning to get all the up to date copy in from abroad." Early on Wednesday morning, Sub Editor Sydney Lightman takes finished copy to Southend, where the typesetters take over. It is there that the Hebrew characters which appear in some headings throughout the newspaper are inserted.

The same evening, a rota of four people ensure a smooth flow of copy continues to reach Southend – either by fax or in person. If you're a Dallas fan, this job is not for you – Wednesday is always a late night for the Chronicle team. If it is a late night spent at the typesetters, reward sometimes comes in the shape of a day off on Thursday. Weekend work is avoidable for the most part, but as Joe Millis explains, it depends on the schedule. "During Passover and Easter, we still have to come in on the Sunday if there is work to be done. Two of us share the responsibility, and do a day each."

By the time the newspaper comes out on Friday, work is well underway on the following week's issue.

Earning your ABC

The Jewish Chronicle is a member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations, who regularly produce official circulation figures for publications all over the UK based on actual sales. The latest ABC figure for *The Jewish Chronicle* was recorded for July – December 1989 at 48,346. Over a month, the newspaper sells 193,384 copies. Phew!

CASE IN POINT



Advertisement Manager Clive Bayard is a PCW fan who has come out of the closet... Without the help of his 8512, life would be much harder.

the groups which contain copy for the newspaper. The first is for the front and back pages and the second for the inside pages, separated because they each require different type settings (the format of the printed word on the page). For the inside pages, the pre-set template instructs LocoScript to restrict the text to a width of 68 characters. Once all the information is typed in, the number of lines is multiplied by two and divided by three; this produces a length in centimetres as a guideline for the page make-up which will later be pasted up on site. Without dedicated word-count software, this is the most accurate way of size judgment.

The copy is then sent by fax to the typesetters in Southend. A 'proof' of the page returns which

represents the approximate appearance of the finished product. At this point, any additional changes may be made. After the final subbing is done, the art department at *The Jewish Chronicle* take the text and 'paste' it up in preparation for printing.

Although about 98% of the in-house writing staff use the PCW to produce their copy, freelance contributions do not as yet arrive on 3" discs. The main forum for freelance work is in the features pages, which are put together at the

beginning of the working week. Because this is the (comparatively) quiet period, there is more time available to key in the hard copy which is sent to the Chronicle offices. This is one of the more laborious tasks in the production cycle of a newspaper or magazine, and requires the average journalist to become a super-fast typist as well.

Advertising the fact

The newsroom is not the only place where a PCW is in use at *The Jewish Chronicle*. Deep in the heart of the building lives the sales department, where a hive of advertisement executives negotiate the daily sale of ad space for the newspaper.

The team is led by Advertisement Manager Clive Bayard, who as well as being a keen collector of our sister publication, Amstrad Action, is reliant upon his PCW 8512 for the administration of his busy department. "In editorial, the PCW is used solely as a word processor" he explained, "but I have developed other applications of the machine for my work here". Clive uses LocoScript 2 to produce internal memos and letters. He also produces all his schedules with the program. "At certain times of the year, the production changes from the normal routine cycle. I have set up a template for a 'normal' issue. I punch in the dates when the schedule is set to change, and the PCW does the rest!"

Another major task is the revision of advertisement rates. Before he had the PCW to help him, Clive carried out the task manually. "I would sit down with three rate bands, 200 entries, a pencil and a calculator, and work out all the new rates. It was very time-consuming." Not any more. Clive uses a spreadsheet to do the work these days - "I load Supercalc, set up a template and press a button. Bliss!" Clive's is the only PCW in the department, and he has produced his own manual in LocoScript for the system should any of his staff need to use the machine.

Homing in

Joe Millis is 30 years old, and has worked at the *Jewish Chronicle* for almost three years as Assistant Foreign News Editor. When he joined the paper, he was 'in the middle' of buying a computer, and was persuaded by colleague Sidney Lightman to invest in an Amstrad PCW 8512 - a decision which he has never regretted.

Joe came to England after living in Israel for 15 years and gained a degree in Middle Eastern Studies from Tel Aviv University. He answered an advertisement in *The Guardian* for the job at *The Jewish Chronicle* "because I had wanted to be a journalist for a long time, and, being Jewish myself, with primarily Middle Eastern interests, it seemed ideal".

When the PCW was introduced to the newspaper, Joe was "very pleased. He believes that it was chosen because of its availability," and because it is simple to use and very reliable. It is difficult to fault - but if I had to criticise LocoScript 2, it would be on the grounds of speed. Also, the dictionary is now up to 18k, packed with foreign names for people, places, politicians - it takes ages to use. The brightness control on the actual screen is not as good as it could be. Having said all that though, the advantages outweigh the disadvantages!" he remarked.

Having a PCW at home enables Joe to keep ahead of his busy schedule by working at the weekend if necessary - "but it also means that I can play games," he commented. "I've got Tomahawk, Graham Gooch's Test Cricket, Brian Clough's Football Manager." Joe's wife is a teacher, and also uses LocoScript 2 with Spellchecker on the family 8512 for producing management reports. The couple use the program to produce letters - "the PCW is fantastic for letterheads" and any general correspondence. Asked if he had considered using any of the home account packages currently available for the PCW (see pages 18 and 19), his response was simple. "Home accounts?" he replied, "I don't have any home accounts". Fair enough.

Technophobes unite!

1991 sees *The Jewish Chronicle*'s 150th anniversary. By converting to the PCW for the production of the newspaper, Editor Geoffrey Paul has gone some way in conceding to the technical revolution. Are there any plans to make any further moves towards increased computerisation? "Recently we have introduced the Z88 - a portable computer which is compatible with the PCW - for the non office-based reporters. They go out and get their stories, and then download on to the 8512 or 9512.

We are really only at the first stage of the game - we have yet to reach the point of direct input which would mean that a lot more of the production side of the newspaper could be done in house. People show me some publications and say 'Oh yes, this was produced on the Apple Macintosh.' I accept that a Macintosh can do more than a PCW, we know that, but I like my machine. It is versatile and easy for someone like me to learn. I don't like things to be too technical - it can put you off when you open a magazine related to a certain machine, and find pages of technical jargon. I think that you should put all the technical stuff in a plain brown envelope at the front of the magazine!" And 8000 Plus? "You have a monopoly on the market place. I'm all in favour of monopoly..." ■



Joe Millis takes a break from foreign news - or is it Tomahawk?

Piece of the action

LocoScript 2 is available from Locomotive Software (0306 740606) priced £24.95. Supercalc 2 is produced by Amsoft/Sorcini (081 557 3395) at a cost of £49.95. If you were lucky enough to have invested in the April issue of 8000 Plus, The Good Software Guide included a round-up of the best games available at the moment for the PCW.

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GET A MOVE ON

Richard Harris persuades the PCW and the Atari Portfolio to swap secrets and watches the start of a meaningful relationship



The well-appareled Atari Portfolio: the folding portable complete with QWERTY keyboard

Tell somebody that you have just bought an Atari Portfolio, and they will probably think that you are someone who just likes gadgets, and that it serves no practical purpose whatsoever. Tell them that you use it for word-processing and worse still, transfer files between it and your PCW, and they will probably regard you as someone who just likes to do things the hard way. "Comms" is a black art to many, but with a little help it is really very simple to transfer files and documents from one machine to another. The Portfolio can play an important role in portable note-taking and document writing, and being of such a small size it is certainly more convenient than lugging your PCW around with you.

The first problem I encountered when buying the Portfolio was that the dealer seemed reluctant to admit that data could be sent to a PCW, because all the Portfolio's communications software is set up for the parallel port. He kindly offered to let me swap the Portfolio for Cambridge Computers' Z88 should it prove impossible. I ignored him, and bought the Portfolio.

As the Portfolio runs MS-DOS, I realised that I could transfer files to Atari's optional serial interface by copying the files to the serial interface with DOS. Then, I could use PIP on the PCW to accept serial cable signals and direct them to a file. There is, however, a much simpler alternative.

Getting in touch

Before using the Portfolio, you will need a serial interface for both the PCW and the Portfolio. The Portfolio's interface must be initialised each time it is plugged in, or the machine reset. To do this, call up "Menu...File Transfer...Initialise." Failure to do this, results in messages such as **xxxxxxxxxxxxxx** being sent. You have been warned!

To copy a file to the Portfolio's serial port, type **COPY**

Filename.TXT AUX: where "Filename" is the name of the text to be sent. Don't press return yet! The PCW is not ready to receive the data. Another more convenient method is to call up the set-up menu, and move the cursor to 'Printer'. Where it mentions printer type, press return. You should now be presented with a menu giving you the options of using a parallel printer, a serial printer or printing to a file. Select **serial**. When you want to transfer a file, simply load it into the editor and select **'Print'**. The file is sent to the serial port, where it goes down the RS-232 cable to your PCW.

RSVP

To receive files on the PCW, load up CP/M, and insert side two of your LocoScript 2 master disc into drive A. Type **MAIL232**. (9512 owners may have to hunt around for the program.) In a few seconds, you should be presented with the opening copyright message, and Mail232 will appear. As the Portfolio's defaults for data transfer are the same as Mail232's, you don't have to worry about setting up the baud rate, data stop bits, and so on. Instead, insert a blank, formatted disc into drive A and press [F3]. A window should pop up, showing **Receive file** and **Send File**. In the space after 'Receive file', type the name of the file that you wish the imported text to be saved under. It doesn't have to be the same name as the one it has been given on the Portfolio. You are now ready to port your data so press return on the Portfolio.

If the transfer has been successful, the text file sent from the Portfolio should appear on screen. However, you need to tell the PCW that the file has ended, otherwise it will be perfectly happy to sit there until Doomsday. To do this we can send a 'Z' signal from the Portfolio to the PCW. The 'Z' or **[ALT]-Z** identifies the end of a file to both PCW and Portfolio. It is typed in LocoScript 2 by pressing **[EXTRA] U [SPACE] Z**.

On the Portfolio, type **ECHO > AUX Z**. Press return. The PCW should whirr, and Mail232's screen should clear. A much easier method is simply to hit **[ALT] [STOP]** on the PCW. This does the same thing, but it's much more impressive the other way. Your text file should have been saved safely to disc.

Pipped at the port

Another way of capturing data on the PCW is to use PIP. Load CP/M, and type **PIP A:Filename.TXT=AUX:[E]**. This translates as 'Please take anything coming in through the serial port and put it onto drive A: as a file called 'Filename.TXT''. The [E] asks PIP to display the file on screen as it receives it. When using PIP, you must send a manual 'File over' code, for example, **Z**, using the procedure detailed above. Hitting **[F1]** should also have the same effect.

You've transferred the file, but what do you do with it? Assuming that you want to load it into LocoScript, you should load up with LocoScript, press **[C]** to create a new document, and then **[F1]** to bring up a menu. Cursor down to **Insert Text** and the disc manager screen will appear. Put the disc with the file on in a disc drive, and press **[F7]** for 'dls change'. Highlight the filename you want to use, and press **[ENTER]**. Your Portfolio file will appear inside your LocoScript document. At this point, extra spaces and linefeeds can be

removed using 'Find and Exchange', in the same way as I've just swapped all the alternative spellings of the word 'disc' in this document to Amstrad's idiosyncratic 'disc'.

Short cuts to success

While tabs created using the editor of the Portfolio will appear as spaces in LocoScript, they won't align with tabs in LocoScript to match with existing ones. The simple way to avoid this is instead of using tabs on the Portfolio, use a symbol such as "T". Then, once your document is in LocoScript, use the Find and Exchange facility to swap all "T"s with tabs.

It may be a good idea to turn word-wrap off before sending data, as the Portfolio word-wraps by putting carriage returns at the end of each line. These are a nuisance to remove once in LocoScript. Likewise, setting the Portfolio's screen width to about 82 characters may help, as will altering the Portfolio's printer margins to remove the spaces it inserts at the start of lines. Experiment to find out.

Using Software Imperative's Flipper on your PCW should make life a lot easier, and will prevent you from having to reboot your machine to swap between CP/M and LocoScript.

Returning the compliment

This is also possible using Mail232. Change your document to an ASCII file in LocoScript 2, save it to disc and load up CP/M. Put the disc with Mail232 on in drive A: and type MAIL232. This time, type the filename to send in the Send Filename area. Don't press return yet. On the Portfolio, type COPY AUX Filename.TXT. This saves the input through the serial port as 'Filename.TXT'. Press return on the Portfolio, and then on the PCW. Hit [ALT] [STOP] on the PCW once more when it has finished.

If you are going to repeat the procedure frequently, it is worthwhile creating a batch file to do the job faster. This sounds more complicated than it actually is. Create a new document on the Portfolio's editor, and type the following:

```
@cls
@Echo File Transfer Program.
@if not exists %1 goto LAB
@Copy aux %1
:LAB
```

Save this with a filename such as PORT.BAT. The BAT suffix tells the Portfolio that the file is an executable batch file. In other words, this means that if you type 'PORT' it goes through the batch file, sequentially performing all the commands in it, for example, copying the file specified to 'AUX:', meaning the serial interface. If you want to transfer a file called "Biddle", you go to MS-DOS, and type PORT BIDDLE.TXT. The batch file does all the rest, saving you both time and effort. The transfer of text between the two computers may look very technical, but is very simple once you have attempted it. Don't be put off by appearances!

Small is beautiful

The Atari Portfolio may be dismissed by some as an expensive executive toy. In actual fact, it has an invaluable contribution to make in creating letters and documents 'in the field'.

As well as the neat text editor, it boasts an address book (with auto tone dialling of your friends' telephone numbers!), a diary, and a Lotus 1-2-3 compatible spreadsheet. It is also an (almost) fully-fledged PC, being compatible with the industry-standard IBM computers. Commands and programs from a PC can be used, allowing you to use it as a "Dynamic Book" and even play adventure games. The built-in "card drive" is a quick and easy way of providing permanent storage for data. You can even buy a card drive for use with your PC for direct

reading and writing to a Portfolio RAM card. I am currently wondering if it is possible to play the PC version of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* on a Portfolio. Now that has promise... If anyone can tell me if it is possible, I would be most interested. ■

Wired for action

In order to connect your Portfolio to your PCW, you will need a 25 way 'D' plug (female) to plug into the PCW's serial interface and a pin female 'D' plug (joystick type) to connect to the Portfolio's serial interface. The pin connections are as follows. If you wish to save yourself an extortionate amount of money by making up your own lead;

9 Pin	25 Pin
1	20
2	2
3	3
4	6 and 8 together
5	7
6	20
7	5
8	4
9	No connection.

Yes, pins 1 and 6 are both connected to 25 way pins 20.

Second opinion

Tim Smith gets to grips with the Portfolio and finds it small, but perfectly formed.

Not having used an MSDOS based machine for some time now, the Portfolio took a few minutes to get used to but once the change from PIP to the less versatile COPY.COM had been made, things began looking up. The keyboard on the Portfolio is of the QWERTY persuasion with four function settings thrown in - ALT, CTRL, L and FN. Although it looks, at first glance, as if you would have to have fingers the size of Tom Thumb's this is not really the case. There is a pleasantly clicky feel to the touch (in fact there is a click sound which you can have turned on or off for effect). The keys are very responsive - they seem to work in the classic manner for portables in that the keypress only becomes effective once you have removed your finger.

In terms of functions and features, the Portfolio is well catered for. Each of the built-in programs can be accessed by pressing the Atari logo key (red) followed by a letter, for example L+E takes you into editor mode while L+W takes you to the worksheet. The editor (small word processor and very effective too), the worksheet (spreadsheet to you and I), diary, address book, and calculator are all excellently implemented and come with their own menus. You can load and save files as well as printing directly from each of them with very little trouble at all.

The final function is SETUP and this is where most of the heavy configuring of the system takes place. You tell the computer what

kind of interface you are using - it is capable of taking both serial (RS232) and parallel (Centronics) interfaces. Unhappily, at the time of going to press neither Atari nor their public relations firm could lay hands on a serial interface so I was unable to test the communications skills to the full.

Options other than communications are available to you in SETUP and these include sounds (that key click as well as alarm buzzers), applications which include international language settings, clipboard saving (you are able to save up to 8k of information from any of the main functions automatically by toggling this on) and printer settings are also available. None of these are over complicated and the whole thing has a good, clean and powerful feel to it.

Being the hard taskmaster that I am, I did go looking for problems with the Portfolio and through all this negative effort, found none to mention. You must relate everything to the size of the machine and in so doing you will find that you have a strong computer which is truly portable and very powerful.

The Editor option is very impressive and with the possibility of adding extra RAM by way of add-on cards you could probably sit in the back garden writing the novel or spreading the sheet and actually enjoy yourself. In conclusion, the Atari Portfolio is definitely worth looking at and will make a good friend to your PCW.

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4 x 17/16.....6.09.....9.96

4 x 115/16.....7.80.....13.09

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3 1/2 x 1 7/16.....5.37.....9.52

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4 x 17/16.....6.09.....9.96

4 x 115/16.....7.65.....12.78

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2 3/4 x 1 7/16.....4.39.....7.51

3 1/2 x 15/16.....3.69.....6.36

3 1/2 x 1 7/16.....4.87.....8.48

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PINS AND NEEDLES

The PCW's dot matrix and daisywheel printers try their best to achieve the tasks you ask of them but they both have their failings. Tim Smith examines five 24 pin alternatives

One of the main selling factors of the Amstrad PCW range is the fact that both the 8000 series and 9512 come with printers which are ready to use. You don't have to configure them, change DIP (Dual In-line Package) switches or work out the difference between Centronics and Parallel ports (there is none). Once you have become more adept at your PCWing, you will find one of two things happening ...

Power and glory

Either you or your machine will begin to get worn out. You will get tired of the sloth of the dot matrix printer or the lack of graphics with the 9512's daisywheel, you will grow weary of the blotchy characters which emerge from the 8000 machines and you will nod off (wherever possible) rather than suffer the clanking of the daisy.

You have many options available to you in the form of 9 pin dot matrix printers (such as the renowned Star LC-10). But if you really wanted to produce some impressive printouts

you should take a look at the 24 pin printer end of the market. The five printers reviewed here cost around £500 or under and most are said to have a life of at least 50 million dots ahead of them. If, for some strange reason, you are thinking of moving on to some other machine then there is no reason why one of these printers shouldn't go with you.

LocoEmotion

While all of these printers will run quite happily from Protext, Micro Design, Mallard BASIC and the CP/M command line, life gets complicated if you want to make use of LocoScript and its many character sets. If you want to use LocoScript 1 you can forget it. If you use any version of LocoScript below 2.20 then you will need to upgrade. That is no problem because if you invest in the Locomotive 24-pin drivers disc (£24.95 from Locomotive on 0306 740606) and maybe a LocoFont 24 pin disc (same address, same people) you also get an upgrade to the latest version of LocoScript thrown in – version 2.29 looks like the latest to us. ■

STAR LC24-10

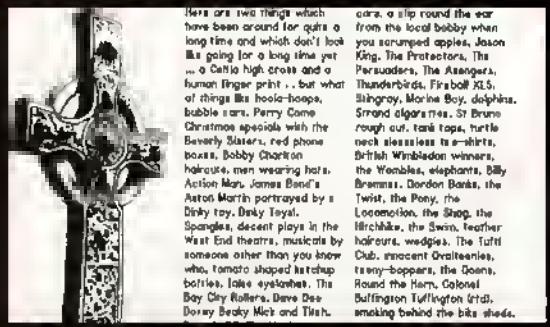
£343.85 • Star • 0494 471111

The LC10-24 is a gentleperson among printers and elder comrade to the 9-pin LC-10, already much beloved by many PCW users for its ease of use and versatility. The 24 pin version is no slouch either. Coming in at a reasonable size for the desktop (8000 owners will have to forget the days of putting their printer on top of their PCWs with all of these printers except maybe the Brother), it is both Epson and IBM Proprietary compatible and is quite capable of downloading characters produced by your software.

Again, like all of the other printers reviewed here, the Star connects to your PCW by way of the parallel port. To

achieve any connection, you will need a parallel cable with two male heads and an interface. The Star produces clear output which really will put your old 9 pin to shame. Paper loading is done from the back of the printer and is as easy as pie. The one bugbear is the DIP switches which are too small and difficult to get at, hidden as they are at the front of the machine beneath its plastic cover.

Setting up the Star to run under LocoScript 2 was simple enough. A printer driver was ready and waiting. The manual (and this is important for PCW users who are used to controlling their printer from the software), is clearly laid out and contains everything you need from basic to technical details. The Star also has a small port below the control panel for additional cards or RAM. ■



The graphics and text output from the Star LC24-10 using Micro Design II

STAR LC24-10

EASE OF USE	4/5	RANGE OF FEATURES	5/5
DOCUMENTATION	4/5	PCW COMPATIBLE	5/5
8000 PLUS VALUE VERDICT			18/20



The Star LC24-10 will put your 9-pin to shame

Be supportive

As you will see from the reviews themselves, not all the printers are fully supported by Locomotive printer drivers. In fact four out of the five lack any driver specific to them. This is not the end of the world however, as the standard 24 pin driver is capable of handling all of them except the AEG Olympia NP136-24 that is.

24 PIN PRINTERS

PANASONIC KX-P1124

£458.85 • Panasonic • 0344 853551

Another of those computer peripherals with evocative names, the KX-P1124 comes from a worthy and reliable stable. It's a rather boxy looking piece of equipment with a front panel which might quicken the hearts of some of our less adventurous readers.

The reason for the battery of buttons (or rather soft plastic panels) is that Panasonic does not make any use of conventional DIP switches to configure it for your use. Normally, if you wanted to choose an International character set (such as French) or a default font or even it you wanted to disable automatic line feeds or enable a cut sheet feeder,

you would have to play around with the switches. With the Panasonic, you have to play around with the buttons.

Unhappily, the explanatory text which is supposed to lead you through the procedure is not as clear as it could be and an element of trial and error is required. This initial configuration of a printer is important when using LocoScript which prefers no fancy bits and pieces to be switched on.

Another interesting feature of this printer is the fact that paper is loaded from the front, below the control panel. The way we normally carry out these reviews is not to look at the



The exotically named Panasonic KX-P1124 comes from a reliable stable

AEG OLYMPIA NP 136-24

£687.70 • AEG • 0753 630111

There's always one isn't there? One which just sticks out from the crowd - and this is it. The AEG is huge, clumsy and the most expensive of the printers we have reviewed. In fact

trying to find a redeeming point about this printer has proved to be the most enthralling part of this particular review.

The print quality of the AEG is appreciably off colour and definition than any of its rivals in this test - in fact when it came to the Micro Design II test, the PCW's own printer did a better job. The print which emerged from the AEG was ridden with lines. For those of our readers who have no interest in graphics, the pin impressions on text were blatantly apparent giving a

rather amateurish feel to the whole affair.

Paper is loaded into the massive carriage of the AEG in the normal push down manner. Both a tractor feed (for continuous paper) and a cut sheet guide are included and as one point in its favour, paper is easy to load.

The front control panel makes use of an informative LCD which shows, at a glance, the state of any set-up you may have programmed in. It is a shame that the print quality is so appalling because this control panel was the most



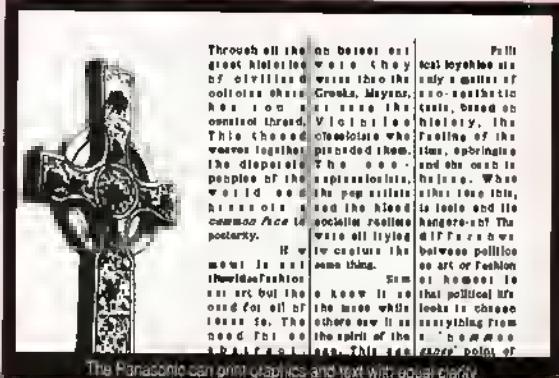
The NP136-24. There's always one which sticks out of the crowd

manual for the first half hour in order to see just how intuitive the machines are - this paper loading process had us looking all over the place. Still, once you're used to it there is no real difference between front loading and back loading, they all get the paper to the bail bar.

Print quality, which is the main thing, was acceptable, nothing too flashy. The graphics were clear and the text produced from Protext was visibly clearer and more professional than that which we had previously been able to produce with the 9 pin. All in all, the KX-P1124 looks like a sturdy and reliable machine.

PANASONIC KX-P1124

EASE OF USE 3/5 RANGE OF FEATURES 4/5
DOCUMENTATION 3/5 PCW COMPATIBLE 4/5
8000 PLUS VALUE VERDICT 14/20



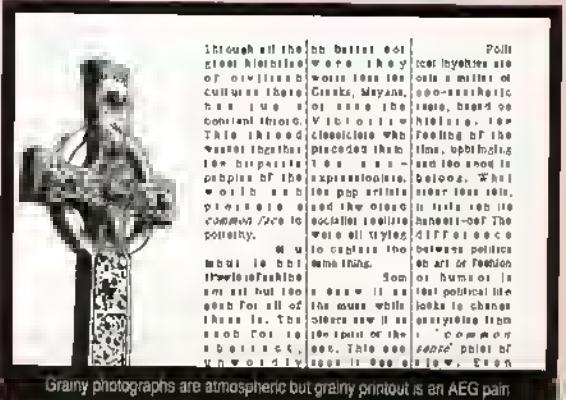
The Panasonic can print graphics and text with equal clarity

straightforward and simple to handle of any of the printers. It also meant there was no playing around with DIP switches in order to configure the printer to your needs. All of the formatting functions are carried out from this panel.

Another point to note is that this printer comes with a small port at the front left into which additional font cartridges can be fitted as and when you require them. Because LocoScript does not support the AEG NP136-24, this ability to incorporate new fonts could be a boon to anyone wishing to produce fancy text using Protext or other word processors.

AEG OLYMPIA NP 136-24

EASE OF USE 3/5 RANGE OF FEATURES 2/5
DOCUMENTATION 2/5 PCW COMPATIBLE 2/5
8000 PLUS VALUE VERDICT 9/20



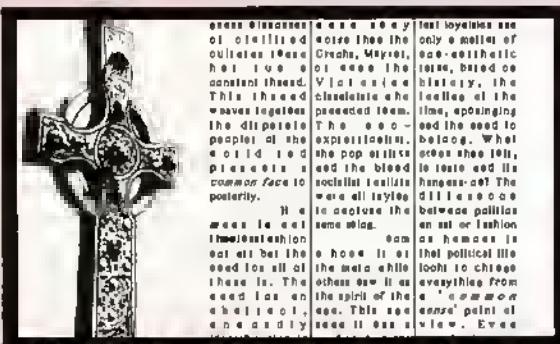
Grainy photographs are atmospheric but grainy printout is an AEG pain

EPSON LQ-550**£458.85 ● Epson ● 0442 61144**

Epson are seen as the standard by which other printers are judged. When buying a printer for your PCW, you are always told to make sure that it is Epson compatible so that is one problem you are not going to have with this one.

In design, the LQ-550 is fairly compact with curves rather than lines. The control panel is on the left hand side, towards the front. It is clear enough and comprises a number of clicky plastic buttons which set font usage, the loading and ejecting of paper and other work-a-day details.

Unlike the AEG, for example, DIP switches are in use and they are to be found just behind the main control panel, tucked away under a hatch. There are two ranks of these which control the international character sets, whether or not you require automatic line feeds and other basic set-up options. No problems were found in setting them or using the controls, in fact using the Epson was a breeze.



Yet more professional looking prints - this time from the Epson LQ-550

The LQ-550 also comes with the ability to upgrade its interfacing ability which may well pay you dividends in the future. You can fit several types of serial interface as well as co-axial interfaces.

Although the Epson comes complete with three fonts (Epson Roman, Sans Serif and Draft) as well as an option to condense text, there is also the ability to fit additional font modules into a slot at the back of the machine.

Again, this will prove a real boon to those people who don't use LocoScript and so don't have access to that software's many character sets.

LocoScript 2 compatibility is achieved with little bother using the standard LocoScript 24 pin printer driver. The quality of output from LocoScript, Protext and even straight from the CP/M command line was excellent.

The only caveat we would have is that the ribbon is stupidly difficult to fit, you have to force it down between print-head and platen with a pen or pencil. This is indeed a small quibble and the Epson is thoroughly recommended. ■

EPSON LQ-550**EASE OF USE 4/5 RANGE OF FEATURES 4/5****DOCUMENTATION 5/5 PCW COMPATIBLE 5/5****8000 PLUS VALUE VERDICT 18/20****BROTHER M-1224L****£419.75 ● Brother ● 061 3306531**

The Brother was far and away the most compact of all the printers reviewed here. It takes up no less desk space than the PCW's packaged 9 pin and is fairly quiet and unassuming. For a budget 24 pin printer it would probably be first choice in terms of price and this is reflected in its range of features which are limited.

These limits, however, do not detract from the overall usefulness of the machine which quite adequately dealt with any task we threw its way. The control panel is sparse of buttons - which means that the inevitable DIP switches (at the back of the printer near the parallel port) have to be used to choose character sets, download character options and the rest of the basic details.

The Brother only actually comes with a single font which is Prestige; this can be condensed, letter quality (LQ) or draft. This means that the character download option is

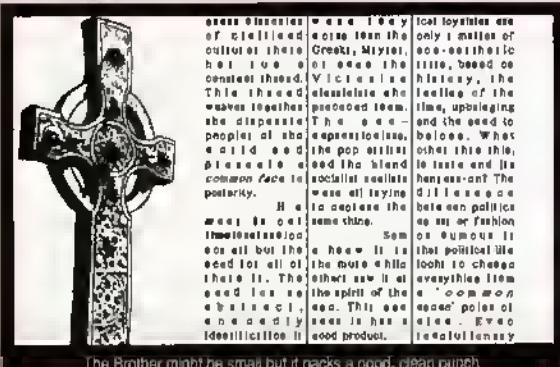
really the most useful if you wish to get anything fancy from it. In fact, when you buy a Brother, what you get is a very basic printer which is the nearest thing to the PCW's built-in 9 pin you could hope for, but with 24 pin output.

Both text and graphics are of acceptable quality, and although there is nothing in between the printhead and the outside world, the noise levels are no greater than those you might expect from your own printer. One strange factor, however, is the lack of bail bar. Paper is fed in like a typewriter from the top and it is up to the platen to keep everything in place. It must be said that there was no problem with this set-up at all, the paper scrolled smoothly enough and printing was unencumbered by this.

An irritation is the platen knob on the left hand side. All a platen knob does is to feed the paper round the rolling-pin platen and the Brother's is so flush to the machine that you have to have tiny, but very strong fingers to make any use of it. Aside from this, the Brother carried out its duties with great aplomb and few worries. ■

BROTHER M-1224L**EASE OF USE 4/5 RANGE OF FEATURES 3/5****DOCUMENTATION 5/5 PCW COMPATIBLE 4/5****8000 PLUS VALUE VERDICT 16/20**

The Epson LQ-550, "seen as the standard by which others are judged"



The Brother might be small but it packs a good, clean punch



The Brother M-1224L, "carried out its duties with aplomb and few worries"

MIKE WORK

Two reviews in one. Tim Smith puts the new Kempston mouse through its paces with HTB's PCWDRAW upgrade

KEMPSTON MOUSE

£69.95 • Kempston • 0234 855666

PCWDRAW

£39.95 • HTB Computers Ltd • 0794 56279



The new Kempston mouse: excellent pedigree, lovely lines

In July 1989 we reviewed HTB Computers' PCWDRAW draughting package. Although we liked it, we also had a few caveats; for example, it would not support mice or lightpens. This has been cleared up and PCWDRAW now supports both the AMX and new Kempston mice. PCWDRAW, version 2 and the Kempston mouse are both reviewed below.

The new mouse is a far more streamlined creature

than its boxy forebear. It makes use of a grey interface (with a 9 pin socket for the mouse lead) which fits to the expansion port at the back of your PCW.

The mouse is a two button unit, the left button being used to execute commands while the right cancels them. Simple enough. It fits snugly in the hand with no straight edges or corners to make long hours of drawing a pain in the palm. The feel is light and the only problem we had with it was a slight stickiness with the right hand button. This cleared up after a few healthy prods with the finger and the mouse finished the test in smooth and easy style.

Drawing on experience

While PCWDRAW now supports the Kempston mouse, you can also manipulate the cursor in two other ways: by using the cursor keys (this is excellent for close-in work such as when using the Zoom facility) and also by way of numeric input from the keyboard – this becomes useful for quick scaling and detailed planning work. The 'working surface'

of the package takes up three-quarters of the screen with a panel running along the bottom containing details of pixel mode (all pixels on, all pixels off, pixels on are switched to off and vice versa), line thickness and line styles. This panel also shows which input mode you have decided to use: cursor, mouse or numeric. The numeric co-ordinates are also shown here as is the current command (F for fill, T for Trace, Z for Zoom, S for Save and so on).

Most of the control is achieved by use of 'hidden commands' (this idea that commands should be hidden rankles a little but a point in their favour is that you can't clear all your work from the screen without really trying – hidden commands need you to press [ALT] and a letter key). These hidden commands actually do the job of altering modes, lines and pixels.

The working surface itself comes in the form of a grid. For plain drawing this gives you ample room to overview sketches and detailed work. The Zoom screen has been improved in two essential ways – you can now save it as a file unto itself and you can also print it out. This means that you can produce drawings to pixel accuracy. A problem with this Zoom screen when using the mouse is that the cursor will not stand still. Frankly it flutters around too much, making any Zoomed changes a near impossibility using the mouse method.

Rodent's, the Kiss

The new mouse, it must be said, is a vast improvement on the previous exhibit. It is light and handles well. Coming from Naksha, who are the actual manufacturers, it is blessed with an excellent pedigree. There really is no competition for it at the present time. PCWDRAW is still easy to use and the improvements to Zoom screens and detail editing raise it up from the adequate to the extremely useful for draughtsmen everywhere. The software's interface with the mouse could be improved, for example in the Zoom screen, but generally the upgrade has worked a treat with both products. Indeed the combination of the two produced a very strong package indeed. ■

THE KEMPSTON MOUSE

Pluses

- ▲ Light in the hand
- ▲ Supports other software
- ▲ Excellent overall design

Minuses

- ▼ Right button slightly sluggish to begin with

RANGE OF FEATURES	5/5	EASE OF USE	5/5
PERFORMANCE	4/5	SOFTWARE SUPPORT	5/5
8000 PLUS VALUE VERDICT			19/20

PCWDRAW

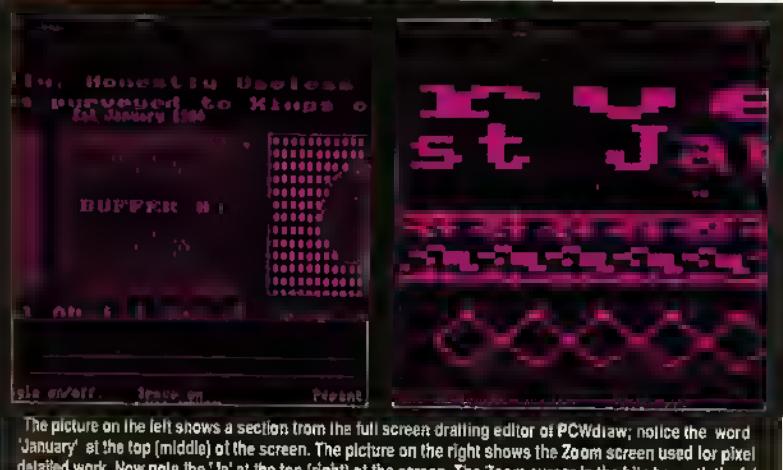
Pluses

- ▲ Zoom functions for close work
- ▲ Detail editing included
- ▲ Large working screen

Minuses

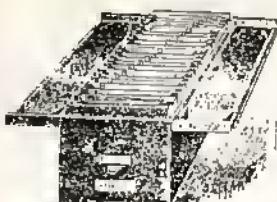
- ▼ Mouse could be more fully implemented
- ▼ Rather scanty documentation

RANGE OF FEATURES	4/5	EASE OF USE	4/5
DOCUMENTATION	4/5	PERFORMANCE	4/5
8000 PLUS VALUE VERDICT			16/20



The picture on the left shows a section from the full screen drafting editor of PCWDRAW; notice the word 'January' at the top (middle) of the screen. The picture on the right shows the Zoom screen used for pixel detailed work. Now note the 'Ja' at the top (right) of the screen. The Zoom cursor is the blip beneath the 'a'.

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NORTH MICRO-LABORATORIES

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All programs are for PCW8256, PCW8512 or PCW9513
and prices shown are all you pay

ON TEST

CALL MY BLUFF

Pete Gerrard wishes that he was Frank Muir when it comes to Nonsense

NOUNSENSE

£16.95 • IMC Software • 0604 54814

You have to admire any company that is still willing to come up with something different in the way of entertainment for the PCW. Admire, that is, until the program that is intended to be supplying that entertainment repeatedly crashes and leaves you wondering whether £16.95 couldn't have been better spent somewhere else.

It's as easy as one, two...er...five?

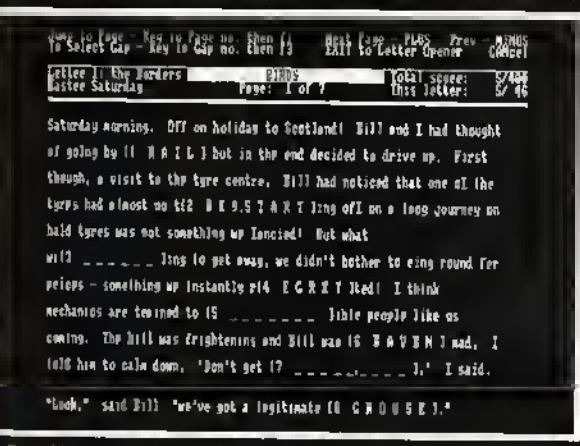


Eventually, we arrive at the *Opening/Close*. Both PETE and FREC are suffering from inconsistent files and so a third player has to say HELLO to the program so that you can have something to look at.

LETTER OPENER



Although FRED managed to get as far as letter number five before the program crashed on him, HELLID has only just started null and has yet to get beyond the first letter. Let's see what a few more file



Some of the missing gaps have been filled in by HELLO, and as you can see from the sixth one, RAVEN II is not the spelling of the word that counts, just as pronunciation. A good idea for a game, but suffering from flawed programming.

allows us to get to grips with the game.

The first time the program gave up on me was when I ignored the message at the bottom of the screen which asks you to enter your name using letters only and input my name as **Pete G.**: the final full stop did it. My fault, but I do feel that for this kind of money the program should have had sufficient checks in it to be able to avoid this sort of thing.

Eventually a more straightforward PETE got started and began to read letter number one. You can only progress through the letters by filling in all, bar six, of the gaps. A bit of a hindrance, but I can see their point. A typical example from the first page of the first letter (each letter has about 40 gaps and 10 or so pages to it, with 400 gaps in total) describes the state of the French's car before going off on the holiday: ... tyres had almost no tire———jing off on a long journey A bit awkward taken out of context, but since the topic for the letter is BIRDS we soon arrive at the answer of RED START. A liking for puns comes in handy, by the way.

Filling in the gaps

Every gap in a letter has a number associated with it, and you jump to any gap by entering the number of it and pressing [I3]. In a similar way you can jump to any page of the letter by entering its number and pressing [I1]. But, on the second page of the first letter, one gap had me baffled, and I was making up all kinds of strange birds as I tried to progress. The computer repeatedly told me when I was wrong, but only until it crashed with a "Memory full" error message.

So PETE tried again, but was told that he was suffering from "Inconsistent Files in 800". FRED took over, since the program allows 10 different players to enter their names and have a go at getting through all of the letters.

FRED was doing very well, despite discovering in letter four that a city in New Zealand is apparently spelt AUKLAND (whatever happened to the C?), and that the citizens of NEW JERSEY no longer live in a state but in a town instead. Minor problems, when you consider that the next discovery was an "Improper Argument in 2000" error message. At that point I gave up.

The basic idea behind Nonsense is a good one. A lot of time has gone into both its development and its on-screen appearance, but until the programmers manage to come up with a fully de-bugged version of Nonsense I'm afraid that unless you like throwing discs against the wall I really cannot recommend it.

NOUNSENSE

PLUSES

- ▲ Novel Idea
- ▲ Fun to play
- ▲ Highly addictive

MINUSES

▼ Plagued with bugs

EASE OF USE 5/5 DOCUMENTATION 2/5
PERFORMANCE 2/5

8000 PLUS VALUE VERDICT

BOOK LOOK

This month, Sophie Lankenau takes protected data into account

COMPUTERISING YOUR ACCOUNTS

by A J Marlow

£9.50 • NCC Blackwell • 0865 791100

Imagine the dilemma; the ledger book and the calculator have both seen better days, your accounting needs are expanding – but computers are not one of your favourite subjects. If you are prepared to invest £9.50 in A J Marlow's guide to computerising your accounts, you could well be saving a fortune; computerisation can be a costly step and a bit of research will prove worthwhile.

The word 'comprehensive' could well have been introduced to the English language after a look through this extremely thorough manual. Marlow covers everything from why to buy the book in the first place to choosing and installing software. The aim is to provide "some ammunition" when deciding to computerise your accounts.

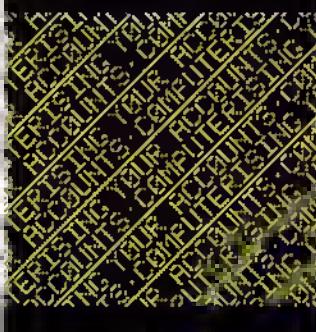
Marlow has the questions of every non-believer covered – the first of which is, of course, why bother to make the change in the first place? Here he stresses the savings to be made in both time and money for big business and back bedroom industries alike. Without undervaluing traditional accounting methods, Marlow manages to impress the benefits of increased efficiency and control in a well-structured argument. He cites as an example the customer reaction to a computer-produced final demand for payment; the chances of being 'overlooked' by a computer are comparatively slim.

The key to making the most out of your computerised system is based on a thorough understanding of your present system. The theory is based on the 'you don't need a sledgehammer to crack a nut or vice versa' doctrine. This applies to both those who are going from manual methods to computerised ones, and those who are upgrading from existing software. Advice on software selection, installation, and maintenance procedures then follows. Every chapter is rounded off with a very helpful summary of the key points to consider – a vital checklist for the beginner.

The book's principal shortcoming is that it hovers between being extremely helpful and desperately pedantic. The devotion to stating the obvious is not patronising but irritating. When it comes to installation, the advice to find out how long it will take, and to set aside the appropriate time in your work schedule does not really need to be said, and the frequent suggestion to make checklists inspires visions of endless paperwork and complicated procedures. There is also an alarming number of terror-inspiring phrases scattered about the text. When you see the words 'court cases' 'arguments' and 'signs of despondency' you might begin to wonder if computerisation is such a good idea.

Aside from this, A J Marlow's *Computerising Your Accounts* is a very helpful publication. At the back there is a list of useful addresses and a glossary explaining computer jargon. The book neither belittles the cause of the small business, nor over-exalts the requirements of the large corporation. It does not aim to convince you to computerise, but allows you an invaluable insight into the benefits which could be yours if you do.

COMPUTERISING YOUR ACCOUNTS



AJ Marlow

COMPUTERS AND DATA PROTECTION

by Eddy Peers and Bill Buckley

£7.50 • Deloitte, Haskins & Sells • 01 681 5242

The Data Protection Act has to be, as we've already had cause to discover, one of the brightest trophies the law profession has yet secured when it comes to woolly legislation replete with seeming ambiguities and inconsistencies.

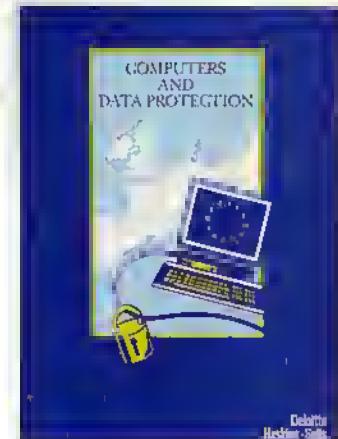
It all began in 1980 when the Council of Europe (CoE) published the 'Convention for the protection of individuals with regard to automatic processing of personal data'. Another group, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) studied the subject and formed 'Guidelines governing the protection of privacy and transborder flows of personal data'. Both publications were the response to general concern about the increased ability of computers to store and communicate information, and the resulting implications for individual privacy.

Many participating signatories have since been inspired to produce their own data protection legislation. In 1984, the UK introduced the Data Protection Act. This means that any individual who suspects that an organisation is holding computerised information on him or her is entitled to access it – for a fee.

This book presents a summary of the principles of the CoE document. Where the actual data is concerned, the Council stipulated that it should be obtained lawfully, used legitimately, that it should be relevant, accurate, and not kept for longer than necessary. The document maintains that every person should have the right to confirm the existence of any computer file containing personal data about them. They may examine details of the data held, and rectify mistakes.

The book then moves on to the application of data protection laws to individual businesses. If you use word-processors, microcomputers, minicomputers or mainframe equipment in your company/place of work you may need to enforce data protection. You certainly need to be aware of the qualifications and exemptions involved. Even 'letter and text preparation and manipulation' is non-exempt from the data protection authorities' scrutiny.

If data protection legislation is applicable to your business, Peers and Buckley suggest a course of action. Firstly, identify the type of information which is being stored, pinpoint its uses, and assign someone to take responsibility for its management. The book then illustrates a 'census' form which sets out guidelines for the work of the data manager. The section also covers the enforcement of security. A survey of European businesses showed that 60% of participating organisations relied only on the computer's operating system to safeguard personal data from the eyes of the unauthorised. The final step is to inform supervisory authorities that you are in possession of such data. This is a fascinating book, and draws attention to a subject which affects us all. There is no easy way to transform details of a complicated legal document into layman's terms, but Peers and Buckley have done a superb job of it.



Deloitte
Haskins & Sells

ISBN 0-850 792-0

8000 PLUS VALUE VERDICT 4/5

ISBN 0-86349-125-1

8000 PLUS VALUE VERDICT 5/5

LETTERS OF CREDENCE

The way you write says a lot about you – or does it? With the help of a new handwriting analysis program for the PCW, we took pen to paper to investigate ...

The Graphologist

£44.95 • Intraset Ltd • 0257 276800

Tell people that you have an interest in graphology (the analysis of handwriting to produce a personality profile of the writer) and it will probably elicit much the same response as the confession that you regularly read your stars each morning on the way to work. Let's face it: it's fashionable to be cynical about such things, regardless of the fact that nations like France and Japan have been using handwriting analysis for years as a way of separating the grain from the chaff when it comes to job applicants.

Hardly surprising, therefore, that when this rather robust program appeared in the 8000 Plus office last month, various members of the team brisled dutifully for ten minutes before lining up at the reviewer's desk clutching samples of their copperplate script for inspection. The results were interesting.

The program is simplicity itself to use. Once you see the familiar CP/M A> prompt beckoning on your screen, insert The Graphologist disc and type **GRPH**. You are then prompted for the name, address and sex of the person whose handwriting you will be analysing. Before you can proceed any further, you will need a full page of ink-written longhand – complete with signature – on a piece of A4-sized unlined paper. The 'unlined' bit is important.

It's then simply a question of working your way through the sixteen chapters of the program and selecting those features which apply to the hand you're examining. The program is extremely thorough; to carry out a full in-depth analysis of somebody's handwriting, you can expect to spend

something like three quarters of an hour in front of your PCW working your way – quite slowly, if you're doing it properly – through the relevant options within each chapter. There are, on average, about ten or fifteen of them.

Spaced out and laid back

There are independent chapters on movement and flow, character formation and the three zones of handwriting (where ascenders like 'd's, 'l's and 'h's are analysed independently of descenders – 'g's, 'f's, 'y's and 'p's – and the main character body). The chapter on line and word spacing is particularly revealing; that's why you will be able to deduce so much more about the personality you're working on if you encourage them to submit their handwriting sample on unlined paper.

As you work your way chapter by chapter through the program, pressing [ENTER] here and there as you go to record your choices, The Graphologist can be heard chugging quietly away behind the scenes, carefully piecing together the various personality traits of the writer who is by now sitting expectantly in front of you in a flurry of ardent anticipation. Not only is this task carried out quickly, it is very unobtrusive; the occasional whirring of disc drives accompanied by the odd flashing light is the only evidence of a machine busy at work probing the inner recesses of the human psyche.

For the more curious graphologist, the programmers have included a useful and fun option which allows you to display on the screen the particular character trait which will be written to the file should you choose to go ahead and select a specific feature. It acts as a kind of sneak preview option and will almost certainly be of benefit if, for example, you prefer to leave out of your grandmother's personality profile the fact that the way she forms her capital 'W's would indicate that she is currently in the middle of a deep schizoid panic. But, then again, half of the fun is in waiting until printout to see exactly what the program has put together on you.

Warts and all!

Be prepared, however; this program doesn't beat about the bush. Not surprising, really, when you consider that it has chapters devoted to criminal tendencies and sexual deviancy. The latter afforded us a chuckle or two, we can tell you. Just remember: if you plan on getting into a close clinch with someone, ask them for a sample of their handwriting first.

The only thing that we weren't too happy about in the three to four page profiles that the program produced on each of us was the prevalence of contradictions. To be informed, in one sentence, that you a natural leader of men only to learn, in the next, that you shirk responsibility and are easily directed by others, did little, needless to say, to entrench our faith. Still, as the manual warns, each user of

* Chapters *

- 1 The zones of writing
- 2 Line slopes of writing
- 3 Line and word spacing
- 4 Movement and flow
- 5 General characteristics of writing
- 6 Margins
- 7 Slant of writing
- 8 Pressure *
- 9 Specific Personality traits
- 10 Signatures
- 11 Handwriting and emotions
- 12 Handwriting and health
- 13 Detailed personality traits
- 14 Handwriting characteristics of criminal types
- 15 Sexual attitudes and behaviour
- 16 Exit program

Use Cursor Keys. Press [Return] to Write. [P] to Display.

The program's skeleton is made up of these chapters from which you select those features applicable to the handwriting in question. Simply press [P] to get a sneak preview of all those twisted personality traits on offer!

The proof of the person ...

But before you go rushing out to buy this program, you might be interested to know what the feedback was from the intrepid band of 'Plusser' guinea-pigs who actually put it through its paces. Here are

some excerpts from the personality profiles compiled by The Graphologist and the various reactions of the team - Reviews Editor, Tim Smith, Sophie Lankenau, our new Staff Writer and Julie Barnes, our Art Editor.

Tim



What the program said:

The writer is skilled in the use of words, speaks fluently and has an above average vocabulary. He probably enjoys playing around with words by thinking up rhymes or verbal jokes such as puns. He is good at tasks requiring verbal manipulation and can learn new languages with ease. He has an above average understanding of written material and can remember most of what he reads.

He is a person with intuition who is prepared to play hunches. He's likely to have a cultured background and may have a liking for lavish living. He has a disinclination to mix and a desire to keep the world at bay.

The flip side: The writer finds it very difficult to relax. He is likely to be lacking in reliability and long-term concentration, may be hyper-sensitive and susceptible to moodiness. He can be a bit of a time-waster and is generally quite extravagant. He can be conceited, critical of others and tends to be very selective in his choice of close friends (*Ah, so that explains it!* Ed.)

Sophie



What the program said:

Generally cheerful and optimistic, the writer is likely to be excitable and enthusiastic with a very sensuous approach to life. She is impulsive, ambitious, gregarious and generally one of life's fighters.

The style of the writing suggests creative ability, intuition, reasoning and occasional irritation and tension. With an informal nature and a desire for popularity, this one's an ideas person: independent, intelligent and sensitive. She will be good at jobs that provide her with plenty of stimulation, fresh challenges and which bring her into contact with the public: selling, journalism, PR and so on. She will excel when faced with a challenge and strive to take on as many as possible.

The flip side: The writer is, at times, likely to appear vain and conceited, stubborn and obstinate. She is prone to irritability and aggressiveness and may, at times, be impulsive and brutal in her manner. She may be a deeply frustrated person who occasionally finds it very difficult to relax.

Jules



What the program said:

The writer has an informal nature with a desire for popularity. She is thrifty and will emphasise the need for economy of time and money. She's inclined to be more individualistic and prefers to live a separate and detached life. Her mental processes are alert and inventive and she is full of new ideas. She can be constructively observant and is able to think and work alone; she may be unsociable at times. She may be gifted at demonstration or presentation work. She has creative ideas, intuition, initiative and a highly developed power of observation. She is an ambitious person who desires to get to, and stay at, the top.

The flip side: The writer would make a strong leader, although in a position of power, she may tend to be intolerant of opinions which clash with hers. She will become irritated if prevented from expressing her views, or if she feels they are not being taken seriously enough. She is also capable of calculated mental cruelty to subdue others to achieve her own aims.

the program may interpret what they see on the written page differently – and, presumably, if you're not an experienced graphologist, you can also interpret it wrongly. This is where the truly knowledgeable user of the program is bound to score. It's a good job that the program is easy to use, because the accompanying documentation is not one of the most lavish productions we've ever come across. Not knowing what garland, thread or painted characters were, it would have been useful to have been able to look up their meanings – along with illustrated examples – in the back of the manual. Having said all that, the program afforded us much fun and frolics and doubtless will you too. ■

Hanging by my thumbs over this kind of thing out of school the school of dull and dreary responses in my portfolio, the smell of changing over nothing but just goes. Just just just day away from being the elephant out there with his trunk hanging out to close for a snappy audience to put the like state of planet as a piano keyboard in a bit I had better a sign saying I don't like this. I don't know that I like

Tim's verdict

"Of course, the complimentary comments are good to hear although I'm not too sure about the desire for lavish living or the disinclination to mix. As for relaxation, I think that playing two games of blindfold chess while reading Bergson is highly calming. As for the less than complimentary bits, well ... a time-waster is one of the more positive things I get called in the office – that's when I mix with those others."

So, you want me to prepare half a page of handwriting do you? I wonder what the latest graphology package will make of my admittedly rather scruffy offering. Am I a kind, caring person, who befriends abandoned children and weaves tapestry tankards for the local homestead? Perhaps I am an axe-wielding homicidal maniac, who rules spring instruction at the highest level. I think that Julie probably feels we're wielding something at Keith at the moment – (I must hide her scalpel before its too late). No, as far as handwriting goes, I don't know if a software package can come up with anything I didn't

Sophie's verdict

"Yes, I agree heartily with all the complimentary bits! Actually, I think that the profile is reasonably accurate – although I can truthfully say that I do not consider myself to be vain or conceited – it is often a trait of 'gregarious' and outgoing people that they lack self esteem (secretly of course) which I know I do. I never, never – absolutely never – exhibit stubbornness so don't try and tell me otherwise."

I come from down in the valley where master whistler's up there. They bring you up to the like your daddy done. Me and Mary we met in High School when she was just here and done out at this valley down to where the fields were. We'd go down to the river and into the river and down the river to the river we'd ride. Then I got Mary pregnant and by her was all she went mad for my nineteenth birthday I got a crown card and a lace neck down to the riverhouse and the judge put it still to his wedding day smiley, we walk down the river no flowers, no wedding dress.

Jules' verdict

"On the whole, this is a fairly accurate assessment of my character, although I didn't necessarily agree with what I read about my relationships. And as for the mental cruelty – that's much too sinister for me! Having said that, I'm certainly impressed with the program even if I'm not exactly proud of some of the characteristics that it's brought to light."

THE GRAPHOLOGIST

Pluses

- ▲ Uncannily accurate
- ▲ Excellent fun
- ▲ Very easy to use

Minuses

- ▼ Too many contradictions
- ▼ When it's wrong it's very wrong
- ▼ Repeated use of 'the writer' is tedious
- ▼ Littered with typos

RANGE OF FEATURES
PERFORMANCE

5/5
4/5

EASE OF USE
DOCUMENTATION

5/5
2/5

8000 PLUS VALUE VERDICT 16/20

FETE

CUT IT OUT!

Take a break from creating your own clip-art and buy ready-made designs. Tim Smith looks at three discs from HD Design

PAGE MAGIC, DISC IMAGE KIT, DISC POSTER KIT

£13.50 (each) • HD Design • 04867 81394

Desktop publishing on the PCW has grown from being merely the art of fancying processed words to a fully-fledged endeavour of its own. What with programs such as Micro Design II, Stop Press and Newsdesk International (to name but three) showing strongly on the market, several support companies have started up. HD Design have been in business for some time now and have brought out seven discs full of clip-art to be used to brighten up your work and take the strain out of having to do the drawing yourself.

Page magic

Our review copies of these discs came in Stop Press (Cut file) format, which of course means that they can be used in Micro Design as well. HD Design do support most of the major desktop publishing packages: each of their discs, is, however, priced at the same rate.

Page Magic itself seems, on side 1, to be a straightforward clip-art collection. You will find sporting images – football (that is soccer, not armoured combat with adverts) players in action poses. There are also tennis and cricket images. You will also find images called Male and Female. These are line drawings of some quite pleasingly normal (that is non-idealised) men and women – although it must be said that the men are in striking briefcases, business poses while the women are merely poised. Moving on from here, we have the subtle distinction of Gents and Ladies, (no not what you're thinking - if there is any humour here it is definitely not toilet humour). These images are rather akin to those you might have seen in the pages of DC comics when the Fantastic Four were fantastic. They definitely are idealised and look as if they have been digitised, both of which are fine as long as a balance is maintained.

Talking of digitised images, there are a few 'Snaps' which are obviously well-digitised. These are photographs which have been scanned in (held in digital form) to desktop publishing software. What this does is to give you near photograph-quality graphics. The HD Design collection of such pictures is used widely over their various discs and leans to the high quality end of the clip-art market. The 'Snaps' which come with this disc are of a high standard.

What stops this disc being merely a collection of clip-art is side 2 which contains borders and frames. These are notoriously tedious and tricky to produce yourself, so the addition of these ready-made designs should liven up your collection as well as lightening your work load.

The borders and frames are pleasantly understated - nothing too flashy which might get in the way of the text itself.

Image kit

The Image Kit has nothing to set it apart from most good quality, run-of-the-mill clip-art galleries. It would appear that most of the images included are digitised, ranging through subjects as diverse as Spitfires, fighter planes and Tiger Moths to the late greats, Nefertiti and Buddha. All the images are clear on screen, showing some detail.

The printouts, however, (and this is true of all Page Magic discs) do look a little jagged around the edges. Tidying up on screen should cure this and it is unlikely that you will want to import as finished, the pictures from disc to your page.

Poster kit

This one really is a boon. What you get are large letters in various styles from old English to a kind of sans serif American. Not only do they come across clearly on the screen, they also print with excellent clarity and quality.

On top of these come a few whole words such as Fete, Antique and Sale. If you have ever tried to produce your own poster sized letters without recourse to specialised software you will appreciate the value of these. Like most things of quality, there is little else to be said except that they do their job with the minimum of effort and to the maximum effect.

If you know how to make use of your own desktop publishing software, then these discs will present no problems to you. They are not over-long to load and all of them are clear and clean.

The only rider, aside from the normal non-copying for resale which the company has imposed, is that a maximum of fifteen images be used in any single piece of work - a reasonable request. The three discs on show here are excellent examples from a field which is growing rapidly. HD Design's more recent discs are produced on a PC using a hand scanner and high resolution VGA screen. These are then transferred over to the PCW using PC Micro Design II. Such products prove that the PCW market is a rich and full place in which to get involved.

PACKAGES	VARIETY OF ART	SCREEN QUALITY	PRINT QUALITY	8000 PLUS VERDICT
PAGE MAGIC	4/5	5/5	4/5	13/15
IMAGE KIT	3/5	5/5	4/5	12/15
POSTER KIT	4/5	5/5	5/5	14/15



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WORDPROCESSING

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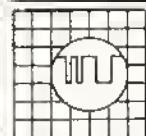
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WITCH HUNT

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Ever since Neil Kinnock suggested that Mrs Thatcher shared certain similarities with the female variety of the necromantic profession, I've had a distinct aversion to witches. Is it any wonder, what with wicked poll tax spells, noxious interest rate concoctions and the like? Not that there's any witch about in this game, at least to begin with. Perhaps somewhat prophetically for our own Incumbent, she has taken up her broom and flown...who knows where.

Third in a series of five Classic Quests adventures, Witch Hunt is a text-only adventure with the same screen presentation as its predecessors. The text – black on green – is neatly bordered, with location and score/moves displayed at the top of the border in a black band. The company describes Witch Hunt as 'a difficult adventure' and 'a real challenge' so absolute beginners might find it a little daunting.

The background to the game is essentially this. You assume the role of Filbir Aspel, obnoxious by name and obnoxious by nature. Like children's TV presenters, game show hosts and cocky adolescents you enjoy nothing more than getting up people's noses, figuratively, of course.

One day, however, you happen to offend seemingly the most innocuous old man that ever tottered on two legs, which was a pretty stupid thing to do really. Stupid because this old dodger just so happens... would you believe?... yes, just so happens to be a wizard, which, in the nature of things, is more than extremely unfortunate. As punishment for your transgression, you have been turned into – no, not a lump of stone, not a trog, not even Norman Tebbit – but worse! You have been transmuted into a Michael Aspel clone – amiable, ingratiating...nice. Ugh!

Witch way now?

Your task, therefore, is to find warty old Esmeralda Hawkins the witch, who, with the gallimaufry of ingredients you have gathered, will cast the appropriate spell and turn you back into the complete and utter dastard you know and love.

At the beginning of the adventure, you find yourself outside the aforesaid lady's abode but the door is locked. You knock but no-one answers, meaning that either there is no-one at home OR that there is someone in but they don't want to open the door, OR that they would open the door but they can't hear you. Thankful that your powers of deduction are at their height, you realise that you need a key!

Once inside the cottage, there are five rooms to explore in all. If you are fortunate enough to turn the appropriate object, you will discover that one room is actually two rooms. (That's what I like about adventure games, they're so logical!). The house hides a range of useful and not so useful objects, including mouldy bread, cornkrakes (yum! yum!), flypaper, a candle and so on.

Outside the cottage lies a wooden beam – a trifle cumbersome, true, but you can manage it. You are surrounded by a series of woods distinguished from each other by the type of trees they contain – ash, elm, beech, and so on. Unfortunately, the descriptions are very simplistic and ultimately repetitive. What makes this part of the game even more infuriating is the lack of any logical geographical relationship between the various locations.

Leading you astray

According to the playguide 'you cannot always expect to return to the place you started from by going in the opposite direction'. This seems to me wholly unnecessary and grossly unfair on the player. What you end up doing is travelling through a series of locations that are either exactly the same as the location you just left or only slightly different. The text states that 'paths lead off in many directions' but most of these take you nowhere of any interest or importance. When you do find something of importance – for example, the well or the bog – it seems hit or miss whether you actually ever find your way back to the cottage.

The parser's lack of sophistication is another frustrating factor. It doesn't, for example, recognise 'and' and too often it doesn't know a rather rudimentary word. 'I don't know the word kick' is the kind of stock response it throws up. To be truly satisfying, an adventure game needs a much more extensive vocabulary and a wider range of responses – the variety that you come across in more sophisticated adventures such as those from Rainbird and Infocom.

To its credit, the game has 'Macro' commands, located on the F keys which save

```

North of Cottage 45% 6
>EXAMINE LETTER BOX
There is a bit of string hanging down behind the letter box.
>PULL STRING
You pull the string and slowly a key appears and drops into your hand. In your excitement you give the string a tug and it breaks. The string upon being broken pulls back through the letter box and disappears. It was probably elasticated.
>OPEN DOOR WITH KEY
>UNLOCK DOOR
You must tell me what to do with.
>

```

To get into the cottage you need to pull a few strings

```

Broom closet 50% 63
>Tribune.
>GET FLYPAPER, NEWSPAPER
Taken.
>EXAMINE NEWSPAPER
This is an old copy of the local newspaper, the Witches Tribune, dated 5-June-1951. The headline is about the creation of a new spell, one to create obnoxiousness, and the collection of some very special ingredients. The ingredients are apparently quite difficult to come by as they are not stocked by the local alchemist. At the bottom of the page is an advert for the new MK VI Flying Broom, which apparently has a new 2000ft power broom head for a higher crossing speed and a new non-slip handle for greater grip in the wet.
>

```

Esmeralda has zoomed off on her MKVI Flying Broom

you keying in the commands TAKE IT, DROP IT, EXAMINE IT and QUIT. The SAVE TO MEMORY facility is particularly useful if you are playing the game at one sitting only and one that you may need to make extensive use of. Of course, the game can also be saved to disc.

On the plus side, the text is quite humorous. When you find a rusty old trolley for example, you discover that it's one of Tescbury's which, after all, 'have branches everywhere', even in madcap adventure game it seems. Is nothing sacred? A ring of rocks guarding a natural spring is protected by a sign indicating that it belongs to the National Trust. In keeping with the background to the game, when you are given your score you are given such appellations as 'Goody Two Shoes', meaning that you haven't got too far, or Mr Nice Guy, meaning that you've still got a fair way to go. By the way, if you're looking for the lichen, the bolder you are the better!

IN A NUTSHELL

Exploring the witch's cottage is quite good fun – lots of interesting objects to discover. The forest surrounding the cottage is very frustrating – mapping doesn't seem to help – but there are some good puzzles. Quite an addictive game despite its limitations.

WITCH HUNT

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LISTINGS

Keep your London telephone numbers up to date and get BASIC's body-clock doing what you want it to.

MAY6.BAS

by Rob Ainsley

A word from the sponsors

The Intellectual Property Unit of British Telecom Plc, who were most helpful in this matter, have asked us to print the following disclaimer in relation to MAY6.BAS:

"British Telecom Plc has no connection with the program listed in 8000 Plus and can not guarantee the accuracy of the results when running the program."

As you should know, on May 6th all the London 'phone numbers are changing, with some 01 numbers going to 071, and some to 081. This listing converts them automatically for you and will work on any reasonable data file. To use, just run the program, giving the file to convert and name of the file you want to hold the converted result. If you are using LocoScript then files have

See changed numbers Y/N ? y		
Old Numbers	New Number	
Shilton P 01 262 67	Shilton P 071-262 67	
Butcher T 01 309-78	Butcher T 081-309-78	
Pearce D 01 832 44	Pearce D 071 832-44	
Wright M 01 822-88	Wright M 071-822-88	
Sanson K 01-636-81	Sanson K 071 636-81	
Hodge B 01-982-36	Hodge S 081-982-36	
Robson B 01-629 88	Robson B 071-629-88	
Haddle C 01-836-43	Haddle C 071 836-43	
Platt D 01-638 88	Platt D 071 638 88	
Barnes J 01-810	Barnes J 081-810	
Beardles R 01-753-01	Beardles R 071-753-01	
Daley T 01-753-43	Daley T 081-753-43	
Webb N 01-857-64	Webb N 081-857-64	

Two files converted from Protect which show old London 'phone numbers and the new ones which take effect on May 6th.

to be made into ASCII first. The converted result which is the file holding the new numbers, can then be inserted into a new document. Any LocoFile or LocoMail file treated in this way will end up looking like the original in terms of page breaks, new lines, tabs and so on, but with the phone numbers correctly converted.

Generally, any database data file should be convertible by this listing straight off, and the converted file directly readable in the database program. If something funny happens though then the file will have to be exported as ASCII, converted, then re-imported.

Basically a sequence, anywhere in the document, of the form **01-space-xxx(space)-01-xxx-** gets converted to **071(space)xxx(space) or 071-xxx- or 081(space)xxx(space) or 081-xxx-** ...so if your numbers aren't in that form (e.g. **01xxxxxx** or **01//xxxx**) then you should either modify them, or maybe even the listing itself.

Another interesting modification might well be to see if you can do away with the files. For example, a program which would allow you to sit down, punch in one number and then see the new one pop out might well be a more pleasing option for many of our readers.

```

10 esc$=CHR$(27):cls$=esc$+"H"+esc$+"E"
20 PRINT cls$
30 DIM b$(6),k$(21),l%(21),m%(21)
40 INPUT "File to be converted"; infile$
50 IF FIND$(infile$)="" THEN 60 ELSE 70
60 PRINT CHR$(7);cls$;"File not found!":PRINT:PRINT:GOTO 40
70 INPUT "Name to give converted file"; outfile$
80 OPEN "I",1,infile$
90 OPEN "O",2,outfile$
```

```

ODA9
0624
09E0
1477
0F02
1E52
194D
08E8
0A38
```

In lines 10-90 the Escape Codes and clear screen routines are set up. You are then prompted for the file of numbers to change and the new file to be written.

```

100 FOR k%=1 TO 21 : READ l%(k%),m%(k%) : NEXT k%
110 DATA 210,289,320,329,350,359,370,389
120 DATA 400,409,430,439,473,474,476,476
130 DATA 480,499,511,512,515,515,537,538
140 DATA 580,589,600,639,700,739,790,799
150 DATA 820,839,920,938,976,976,978,987,987
150 WHILE NOT EOF()
170 a$=INPUT$(1,#1)
180 IF a$<>"0" THEN PRINT #2,a$: GOTO 340
190 b$=INPUT$(1,#1)
```

```

1259
0C12
0C31
0C5E
0C81
0FD2
0F3A
060F
106E
061A
```

The DATA lines from 110-150 contain the heart of the program. Most errors in type-in listings occur within DATA lines, so check and double check.

LISTINGS PLUS

```

200 IF b$<>"1" THEN PRINT #2,a$+b$; : GOTO 340      1133
210 FOR j%=1 TO 5: b$(j%)=INPUT$(1,#1) : NEXT      10A7
220 p%=( b$(1)=" " OR b$(1)="-" )
230 FOR k%=2 TO 4
240 p%=p%+( b$(k%) >= "0" AND b$(k%) <= "9" ) : NEXT k%
250 p%=p%+(b$(5)=" " OR b$(5)="-")
260 IF p%>-5 THEN 270 ELSE 280
270 PRINT #2,"01";:FOR k%=1 TO 5 : PRINT #2,b$(k%);:NEXT:GOTO 340 1B54
280 code% =VAL(b$(2)+b$(3)+b$(4)) : new$="8" : q%=-1
290 FOR k%=1 TO 21
300 q% =q% * (code% < 1%(k%) OR code% > m%(k%)) : NEXT 1359
310 IF q% =0 THEN new$="7"
320 PRINT #2,"0"+new$+"1";
330 FOR k%=1 TO 5 : PRINT #2,b$(k%); : NEXT
340 WEND      1026
                                         0762
                                         07A4
                                         0751
                                         0EEB
                                         08A4
                                         0C28
                                         08BA
                                         11E4
                                         03F9

```

The DATA which you will have typed in now serves as the ammunition in the conversion process. Notice the use of the variable k%.

```

350 CLOSE      0422
360 PRINT cls$      06A9
370 INPUT "See changed numbers Y/N ";see$      153F
380 REM see$=INKEY$:WHILE INKEY$=""!GOTO 290:WEND
390 see$=UPPER$(see$)
400 IF see$ <>"Y" AND see$ <>"N" THEN PRINT CHR$(7):GOTO 360
410 IF see$="N" THEN END:ELSE GOTO 430.      170A
                                         0AA8
                                         19D8
                                         1B22

```

The files are closed and the job is done. You now have the new London numbers. Want to see them? Read on...

```

420 PRINT:PRINT:PRINT      0DBC
430 PRINT TAB(5)"Old Numbers";
440 PRINT TAB(40)"New Numbers"      0EE4
450 OPEN "I",1,infile$      0EE3
460 OPEN "I",2,outfile$      08D1
470 WHILE NOT EOF(1)      0A12
480 INPUT #1,field$      0943
490 INPUT #2,feild$      0803
500 PRINT TAB(5)fields;      07F2
510 PRINT TAB(40)feilds      0A47
520 WEND:CLOSE #1:CLOSE #2      0AF1
530 END      0D1F
                                         036C

```

You now get the chance to see the change. Some database files which have not been saved as ASCII will lose the tabbing and such like but this should give you a rough idea of the new information.

How to Type in a Listing.

First you need to get Mallard BASIC up and running. Insert a copy of your CPM disc - not the master, make sure that you are using a copy. At the A> prompt type BASIC and press [ENTER]. BASIC is loaded when the A> disappears and a small message is displayed on the screen:

Mallard-80 BASIC with Jetsam Version 1.29
(c) Copyright 1984 Locomotive Software Ltd
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31597 tree bytes

Some of the details, such as version number, date and bytes might be different but essentially the message will be the same. BASIC is fully loaded when the CPM A> is replaced by ok. You're now ready to type in the listings. Do this as they appear on the page, line by line. Don't type the four figure hex numbers at the end of every line as these relate to the Checksum program published in the April 1990 issue.

Typing errors are quite common so check each line carefully. If you find a mistake before pressing [RETURN] simply cursor back to it and make the

required correction using the [DEL] keys. If you realise that you've made a mistake after pressing [RETURN] you will need to type EDIT and the number of the offending line. You can then edit any errors in the same way as above. Once you're sure that all is correct, press [RETURN]. The corrected line will be accepted into the program.

When you've typed in all the lines and made any corrections, type LIST to print the entire program on the screen. If you want a copy sent to the printer you will need to type LLIST.

After making another line by line check you must save the program. Do this by typing SAVE" followed by a filename such as MAY6. You don't need to bother with the .BAS as Basic assumes this. Make sure the filename is no longer than eight letters.

Finally type RUN and wait. The chances are that the dreaded Syntax error in line so-and-so or some other message will appear. The line number might not be the exact place in which the error occurred but it will narrow down the search. Edit any errors in the manner we have noted and try again. If all else fails - RTFM - or Read the Flipping Manual as programmers are wont to say.

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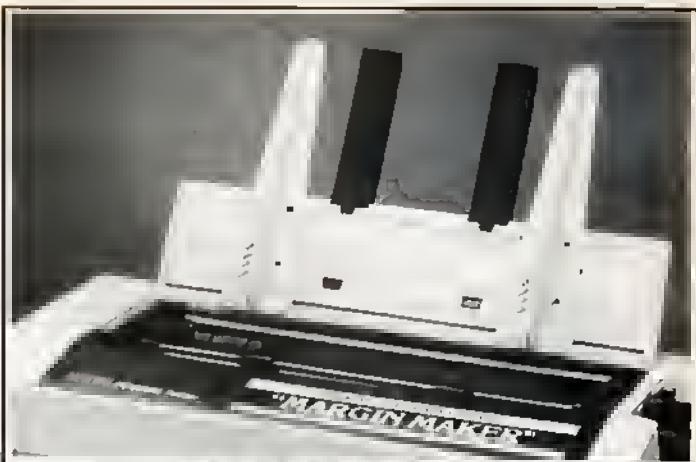
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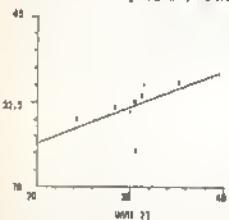
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CLOCK.BAS

by
Mike Higgenbottom

This program provides information for people wishing to include a degree of real time implementation in their BASIC programs. In itself the program is of little use but it does contain all of the information required to implement a clock 'function' in either 24 or 12 hour clock formats. In addition, and like the time set facility which runs under CP/M, it also allows the clock to be set to any particular time which you might require.

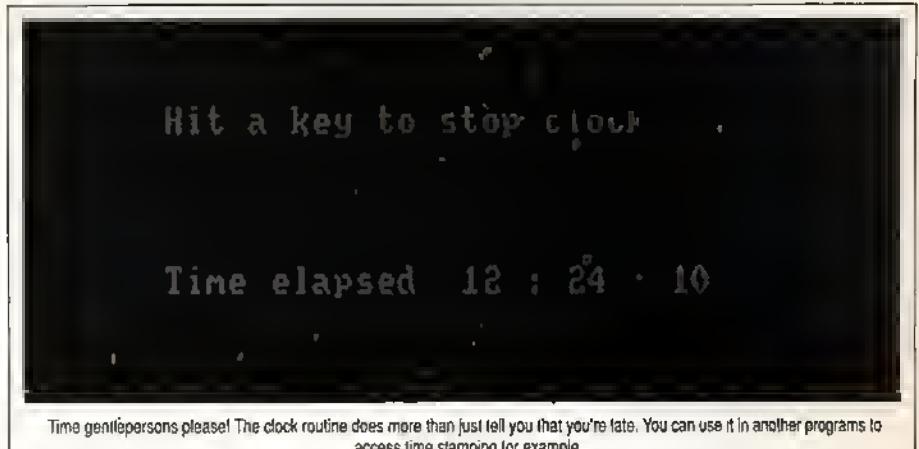
The PCW maintains an internal clock, consisting of hours, minutes and seconds, in memory from 64502 to 64504. This clock runs to a high enough degree of accuracy for most purposes. Many people know that these locations can be used to seed a pseudo-random number generator but the idea that these locations are actually a clock seems to be a little less well known.

After loading BASIC, type LOAD "CLOCK". The CLOCK listing has been included in a small demonstration program, lines 30 to 70, 150, 500 and 520 to 530 can be deleted to leave you with the CLOCK listing itself.

Program construction: The variable t\$ in line 90 holds the address of the first byte of the internal clock (hours). Offsets of +1 and +2 are used to point to the bytes for minutes and seconds.

The function FNxi% in line 140 is used to convert the values of hours, minutes and seconds entered by the user into the internal format required by the clock.

The function FNix% in line 150 is used to reconvert the internal format to values ready for printing. It should be noted that the value



for hours needs adjusting further if working in 12 hour clock.

The variable t\$ in lines 190-260 is split up into the constituent parts of hours, minutes and seconds and these values are stored in th%,tm%,ts% after being converted to a value between 0 and 23 for hours (12 hour format is also converted to 24 hour here) and 0 to 59 for minutes and seconds.

In lines 310-330, the variables th%,tm% and ts% are converted to internal format by FNxi% and are poked into the clock bytes, thus setting the clock.

Lines 360-410 convert the internal clock to the equivalent values of hours minutes and seconds ready for printing.

Line 430 prints the relevant number of spaces to blank out the last time printed.

Line 450 prints a message two seconds after the clock was started.

Notes of interest: When typing in the program lines 100 and 110 contain the character `V This character is obtained with [EXTRA]-@.

The internal clock holds values of hours, minutes and seconds in a rather strange format:

0 to 90 to 9	16 to 25
10 to 19	

20 to 29	32 to 41
30 to 39	48 to 57
40 to 49	64 to 73
50 to 59	80 to 89

This format makes life a little more complicated for BASIC programmers but it allows much more efficient clock access to machine code routines since the multiples of 16 lend themselves to processing by the Z80 Rotate and Shift operators.

Finally, for those wishing to modify this program, it should be noted that the clock will still be running whilst your program executes. This makes it necessary to access all three clock bytes in a small region of program space since if, for example, a significant delay occurs between accessing minutes and seconds, the seconds byte may wrap around to zero during the delay but the value of minutes will still be that corresponding to the minute before the seconds reached zero. A subtle point perhaps but one worth noting.

Unlike a lot of the games listings we have had cause to print over the years, CLOCK.BAS may be kept and used as a subroutine in many other of your own programs. An example of this might be to write a program for international time zones. ■

```

10 '** CLOCK.BAS by Mike Higginbottom. **
20 ** Prints elapsed time since keypress. **
30 GOSUB 90
40 PRINT c1$:CHR$(7)
50 INPUT "1)QUIT, 2>CLOCK, 3>MESSAGE ";k$
51 k%=VAL(k$)
52 IF k%<0 OR k%>3 THEN GOTO 40
60 ON k% GOSUB 510, 160, 520
70 GOTO 40

```

11DF
15F7
0506
08A4
1272
04D1
0BED
08C4
049A

The initial menu can be omitted when you wish to use the clock routine in other programs. It can also be stolen for your own programs.

```

80 REM /* SET UP VARIABLES AND FUNCTIONS */
90 t!=64502!: 'start of internal clock memory
100 es$=CHR$(27)
110 c1$=es$+"E"+es$+"H": 'clear screen
120 pm$=es$+"Y"+CHR$(42)+CHR$(60): 'print position for messages
130 pt$=es$+"Y"+CHR$(47)+CHR$(60): 'print position for time
140 DEF FNxi%(t%)=16*(t%\10)+(t% MOD 10)
150 DEF FNix%(t!)=10*(PEEK(t!)\16)+(PEEK(t!) MOD 16):RETURN
160 REM /* SET AND START CLOCK */
170 PRINT c1$:PRINT "Work in 24 hour clock? (Y/N)"

```

1598
152E
0527
0E78
1CDD
1AD6
0DE9
17B8
0EAD
175C

All the basics of the program are set up here, from clear screen to user defined functions.


```

180 a$=UPPER$(INPUT$(1))          08B0
190 INPUT "Enter time in form 10:02:59";ts 1281
200 IF a$<>"Y" THEN PRINT "A.M ? (Y/N)":b$=UPPER$(INPUT$(1)) 1ACE
210 th%=VAL(LEFT$(ts,2))          08E6
220 IF th%<0 OR (a$<>"Y") THEN 221 ELSE 230 0FEB
221 IF (th%>12) OR (a$="Y" AND th%>23) THEN 190 0F95
230 th%=(th%-12)*((a$<>"Y") AND (b$<>"Y") AND (th%<>12)) 1300
240 th%=(th%+12)*((a$<>"Y") AND (b$="Y") AND (th%=12)) 11AE
250 tm%=(MID$(ts,4,2))          0934
260 IF tm%<0 OR tm%>59 THEN 190 0D2B
270 ts%=(RIGHT$(ts,2))          0A1F
280 IF ts%<0 OR ts%>59 THEN 190 0D3D
290 PRINT cl$:PRINT pm$;"Hit any key to start clock."; 1B4B

```

The initial information is supplied by you ... what time is it? You will see that the time is entered as one string variable *t\$* which is then converted to numerics and broken down into hours, minutes and seconds.

```

300 cs=INPUT$(1)          0588
310 POKE t!+2,FNxi%(ts%):'set seconds in internal clock 1C47
320 POKE t!+1,FNxi%(tm%):'set minutes in internal clock 1C7A
330 POKE t!,FNxi%(th%):'set hours in internal clock 19C3
340 PRINT pm$;"Clock started ....."; 1163
350 REM '* GET ELAPSED TIME AND PRINT IT * 1474
360 mte%=(FNix%(t!+1)-IF a$="P" THEN 140) 1401
370 IF hou%>11 THEN b$="N" ELSE b$="Y" 0E5D
380 hou%=(hou%-12*(hou%>0)+12*(hou%>12));'back to 12hr 161F
390 mte%=FNix%(t!+1):sec%=FNix%(t!+2) 0F4A
400 PRINT pt$;"Time elapsed ";hou%;":";mte%;":";sec%; 1569
410 IF a$="Y" THEN 430 080E
420 IF b$="Y" THEN PRINT "am";ELSE PRINT "pm"; 15EB

```

The PCW's internal clock is accessed and POKE'd into action. The data is then printed to the screen.

```

430 PRINT STRINGS$(ABS((hou%*10)+(mte%*10)+(sec%*10)), " ") 1696
440 REM * STOP AND RESET CLOCK * 0E91
450 IF (sec%-ts%+60) MOD 60=2 THEN 451 ELSE 460 1200
451 PRINT pm$;"Hit a key to stop clock. " 124E
460 d$=INKEY$: IF d$="" THEN 350 0A5A
470 PRINT pm$;"Reset clock? (Hit Y or N) "; 1222
480 e$=UPPER$(INPUT$(1)) 08CA
490 IF e$="Y" THEN 160 0845
500 GOTO 10 0464
510 PRINT cl$:END 0641
520 FOR i=1 TO 500:PRINT " hello ";:NEXT 1330
530 RETURN 050A

```

After a gap of two seconds you are asked if you want to stop the clock. Lines 510-530 contain another sub-routine which can be omitted in your own program.

Belter competition

In the March Issue we proposed a competition. This was to design a BASIC programming utility which would do the following things;

- track variables
- track REM statements
- track PRINT statements

In each of these cases, the program must be able to give the number of times each one appeared and where. But since announcing the competition and its prize, we have to say that the response has been rather disappointing. The prize we offered was any book you could name (up to £20 and which we could lay hands on) as well as a payment of up to 50p per line of

code, depending on quality.

Although the listings we have so far received have been of excellent quality, we feel that we should hold the winner over for one more month to give other people a chance. Listings can be any length (up to a maximum of 120 lines), there should be no more than 80 characters per line, saved in ASCII form on an A: drive disc. It is also vital that full documentation be included in the package.

So, send your efforts to: Listings Plus, Belter Competition, Beaumont Court, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2XF. And please tell us which book you would like.

LocoApril

Many, many, many of our readers have phoned in (in different states of temper) to ask why NEWCHAR.BAS by Richard Clayton (8000 Plus, April 1990) turned their LocoScript 2 characters upside down. Well, with hat in hand, we must admit that the whole thing was an April Fool. Of course we had nothing to do with it, it was all Locomotive's fault; honestly, we only ran it, checked it, checksummed it and printed it. For those of you who enjoyed the joke we say Huzza! For those who think that they might have wasted a little bit of time, we say Whoops-pardon but you did get some valuable programming experience from Richard Clayton, a man worth learning from. So, happy May and wait 'till next year!

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- Context-sensitive help windows appear at the touch of F1 key
- Back-up copies of data files created automatically
- Easy installation routine produces self-starting "Turkay" disc
- Data may be kept on program disc or on separate disc(s)
- Suitable for PCW-9512, PCW-8512 and PCW-8256
- Suitable for single or twin disc systems
- Comprehensive 64 page manual (with index)
- Two sample sets of data provided for initial practice
- Free and indefinite telephone support

Here are some comments from the people who matter and who really know the system - the users:

I am so impressed with the software that I thought you might like to know that I think it is superb and surpasses many other packages I have bought at more than twice the price of Money Manager. Thanks for a fantastic, easy to use piece of software that represents outstanding value for money. D.A.J. (Linca)

I cannot let this opportunity pass without repeating my satisfaction with Money Manager. I am using it for the book-keeping of several small businesses. Before I retired recently after 40 years in banking, 24 of which were as a branch manager, I would have been delighted if my small (and some not so small) business customers had presented me with figures and statistics of their businesses as produced by Money Manager. It really is a program which, being so easy to use, could save many businesses from the chaos and disaster which can, and so often does, result from poor or non-existent book-keeping. R.A.L. (Cheshire)

Thank you for providing such a marvellous and easy to use program at such a reasonable price. No longer do we guess how much is where and no decisions are made without first consulting Money Manager. K.D. (Milton Keynes)

I think this is the best program that I use on my computers and I have tried quite a few programs! A.B. (Iceland)

I have bought the new Money Manager - and I think it is magnificent. The manual is so rare in the mass market: a well printed, clear, concise, friendly instruction booklet written for us amateurs who really aren't computer experts, and don't particularly want to be. I really do congratulate whoever listened to the market, and whoever wrote the instruction book. Well done indeed! C.P.G. (Hove)

I have been very pleased with the program, in fact it is an indispensable part of my business. My accountant is pleased and I'm sure it saves some of his fees due to the reports etc that I can give him. It's incredible that it can be so good at this price. L.P. (Welsall)

The program is perfect, just what I needed. If it were edible I would have a second portion. N.T. (Wiltshire)

I should like to say how pleased and impressed I am with Money Manager. It seems to me far simpler, faster and more flexible than any of the other accounts packages I have looked at. I have so far used it to prepare two sets of accounts for a small business, and am delighted with the results. R.D.H. (Yeovil)

I must say that next to my word-processor this has to be my most frequently used program and certainly has made an astounding change to our finances. All in all ... brilliant! Dr I.N.P. (Co Durham)

I would like to take this opportunity of congratulating you on an excellent program. I am treasurer of a local cycling club and the help that the program gives me in that job is tremendous, and impresses the auditors too! It is also very useful to be able to keep track of my personal accounts, and know to the penny how much I owe to the various credit card companies. Keep up the good work! J.F.N. (Wiltshire)

Over 25,000 users can't be wrong!

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SOFTWARE DEATHWISH

If it weren't a violation of copyright, I'd be tempted to suggest that every Amstrad monitor should come stencilled with the large friendly message DON'T PANIC. So many people seem to prostrate themselves before their PCWs in an ecstasy of panic, that a time traveller from ancient Greece could quite reasonably deduce the machine to be a small household shrine to the great god Pan.

This state of terror resembles the Examination Dream suffered in later life by so many victims of the education system. You find yourself confronted with a nightmare list of questions which cannot possibly be answered, even if you still knew anything about the forgotten subject. Cold fear takes you by the short and curlies, your ribcage suddenly becomes three sizes too small, sphincters begin inexorably to loosen....

For all too many PCW owners, this whole complex of terror and mental paralysis is instantly conjured up by the CP/M prompt message (readers of a nervous disposition should skip what follows): A>.

Running on the spot
Software people who try to explain things over the phone are all too familiar with the symptoms of panic. One is a sort of wild, despairing haste, leading to exchanges like this.

EXPERT: "Now I want you to do exactly what I tell you. First, put in the disc with MASTER written on it. Then —"

OVER THE TELEPHONE: "Yes yes I know that bit," tap tappety tap. "I'll just start it up," tappety tappety. "and now Oh God! it's just not working, it keeps saying question marks, I'll have to turn the thing off and start again," CLICK "Sorry, which disc did you say?" tap tappety....

EXPERT: "Stop! Stop hitting keys and listen!"

A related symptom is that sufferers tend to get stuck in a loop, repeating some quite simple error (wrong disc in place, or a

command slightly mistyped) under the firm conviction that they are following the exact procedure in the instruction book.

EXPERT: "Let me go through this keystroke by keystroke. Type these letters...."

TELEPHONE: "But that's exactly what I've been doing all..." (Long pause. Very querulous tone.) "It never did that before."

I sympathise with the victims, who have usually worked themselves into a ragged emotional state before resorting to calling the "expert". Unfortunately, frayed nerves can lead to the helper getting a hard time.

EXPERT: "Let's see if all the right files are there. Type DIR and tell me what —"

POSSIBLE REPLY 1 (splenetic): "Look, I know what disc I put in, and what's more I know all about listing directories in CP/M, so there's no need to treat me like some stupid kid, thanks very much."

POSSIBLE REPLY 2 (half-sobbing): "Oh dear, you keep going on about typing DIR and all that technical stuff, I just can't understand any of it, why won't you stop trying to blind me with science and just tell me, in simple terms, what to do."

The final straw

This last response approaches the final stage of panic which I think of as "software deathwish". Stand back! I am about to commit amateur psychology. What seems to happen is that the panic victim becomes emotionally committed to *not* understanding, to *not* solving the problem. The buried reasoning might go roughly as follows:

"I'm not an idiot. But I'm totally baffled and frustrated by this software. It *must* be incomprehensible. This bloke who keeps saying it's really quite simple is obviously lying through his teeth. I'm not going to listen to him. (Besides, if it truly *is* simple, what does that say about me? Better not think about that.)"

Sometimes, trying to help callers who have reached this

LANGFORD



A page in the company of author and PCW pundit

David Langford

state, one is left with the uneasy feeling that immediately after hanging up they plan to hurl the PCW from a high window, and to jump right after it.

Look before you leap

This being a far from perfect world, I don't say that all software is dead easy to learn (much is idiosyncratic) or that all experts are helpful (the most likely response to a call for support is "Just putting you through", followed by twenty groan-laden minutes of Muzak). However, here are some hints on how not to make things worse by succumbing to blind panic.

Allow yourself time to master new programs. Non-swimmers do not as a rule leap into the Channel, point themselves towards Calais, and reckon on picking up the techniques of breast-stroke as they go.

Similarly, the way to learn how to use that new spreadsheet is not to try and move your complete business records system to it on the day the tax return has to be posted.

Check all software if you change computers; there's nothing more panic-inducing than the sudden discovery that a familiar program has stopped working. That roof-rack you bought for the

old Reliant Kitten will have to be replaced now you've traded it in for a Rolls: the same goes for all 8256/8512 start-of-day discs if you move to a 9512. But the pink fluffy dice from the Kitten are Rolls-compatible and may be transferred — as can most 8256 programs that run with CP/M.

When ready to scream with rage, remember the magic mantra "RTFM" which constantly trembles on the experts' lips. This of course stands for "read the flipping manual". Just this once, forget all the short cuts which you "know" are OK, turn off your imagination, and follow the instructions step by laborious step. That ought to do the trick; if, however, the program *still* doesn't work, you now have my permission to scream.

After screaming, stay clear of the wretched computer (and all close members of the family and/or household pets) until your pulse rate is back to normal. Be warned; this may take quite some time.

When you're as experienced as I am, you will find that life with your computer becomes a breeze. You'll meet problems with total equanimity, a tranquil... oh sod it, another missing address mark, and that's my only copy of the column, and the deadline is... AAAARGH!

TIPOFFS

T Tips **Q** Questions

It's just not cricket! Four pages of tips that give you an unfair advantage over your PCW

Stumped by LocoScript? Caught out by CP/M? Bowled over by BASIC? As the cricket season gets under way, come to Tipoffs, where the inspiration is never run out. This month David Harry of Solihull dons his box (but only in LocoScript), Keith Simons has the key to a BASIC problem, Ian Chisnall underlines a feature of LocoScript and J Newman shows the smart way to use Mini Office's spreadsheet. They win £10 each.

So if you know of any smart pieces of play in LocoScript, BASIC or any well-known program, tell us – the best win hard cash! Send your contributions to: Tipoffs, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2XF.

Exit right

Q As a Protext user on a 9512 I am irritated by the position of the [EXIT] key by the right of the spacebar. It's easy to hit accidentally and has the same effect as [STOP], switching mode – making it redundant but awkward. I keep finding that in the middle of a document I am suddenly typing text at the a> prompt instead of in the text! Is there a way of 'disabling' the [EXIT] key to stop it doing this? Satty Newman, Bath

8000 PLUS: Yes – you can use CONFIG to change it. With your startup disc in the drive type CONFIG and select option 5 'Set keys for the PCW'. Type the code for the [EXIT] key, (probably 08) (Check on page 544 of your Protext manual). End with [RETURN]. Now press TAB to move across to the right hand table and type 2020202020 (five lots of 20). What you're doing is to make the EXIT key (known as key 08) return the character 20 hex (space) in the states of normal, SHIFT, ALT, SHIFT-ALT and EXTRA.

Now press [STOP] to get back to the main menu, save the configuration and restart Protext. The exit key is now to Protext with 0. When you restart you find that EXIT merely gives a space.

MOPping up **WINNER**

Q In Mini Office's spreadsheet, you can't use a 'circular' command such as B3=B3+B2 to accumulate in B3 successive entries into B2.

However, there are many instances where such an action is essential – for instance, entering sales figures at the end of each day to give a running total of the week's takings. Here is how it's done.

Put the cursor at B3. Press [I5] (enter formula). Enter OLD(B3,B3)+B2. To use this, put a number into B2 and press [ENTER]. With auto-update on, any other calculations using B2 will be carried out at once, but B3 will continue to show (Function). This allows you to perform the accumulation process with a number of pairs of cells, say for sales figures of different items. It also gives you a chance to recheck that you've entered all the right numbers. When all is checked, press [I3] and after a pause the additions will all be made at once. Negative entries are accepted.

JAS NEWMAN,
Monkton,
Devon

Blocks to that

Q Blocks in LocoScript are a handy way of moving pieces of text around in a document. But they can also be used for moving text from one document to another. Suppose you want to move a paragraph from a file called NOTES to one called CHAPTER.1.

1. Edit NOTES and go to the beginning of the section to be copied. Press [COPY].

2. Move to the end of the section to be copied and press [COPY] again if you want it to remain in NOTES, or [CUT] if you want it to be removed from

NOTES. The text you have p.p. in the block is highlighted for you.

3. Give a number from 0 to 9 to name the block. LocoScript 1 only: Now press [I8] and select

'Save block'. You are returned to the disc manager. Move to an appropriate group to save the block in, press [ENTER] and name the block.

4. Carry on editing or save and exit as usual. You can actually 'Abandon edit' if you don't want to save the changes to the document NOTES and the block is still saved.

5. Edit the file CHAPTER.1.

Move to the appropriate point for insertion of text. LocoScript 2: press [PASTE] followed by the number you gave the block. LocoScript 1: select [I7] 'Insert text' and move the cursor over the block you just named. Press [ENTER].

The block is inserted. Now carry on editing as normal.

DS MORGAN,
Blaenau Ffestiniog, Gwynedd

Column crunching

Q I want to enter some numbers in LocoScript in four columns like this:

1	41	81	121
2	42	82	122
3	43	83	123

Do I have to type 1 [TAB] 41 [TAB] 81 [TAB] 121 [RETURN] and so on – or is there a quicker way by typing the numbers 1 to 160 down in one column and then pasting sections of it up?

RD SARTIN,
Rumney,
Cardiff

8000 PLUS: I'm afraid there's no way of pasting sections up in separate columns like this. Protext can do it using its 'box' mode, but in LocoScript you're stuck with the way you're using already.

Corresponding tip

Q An extension to Elaine Bullard's tip in February. She suggests keeping all your letters to the same correspondent in the same long file, starting each letter on a new page with [ALT][RETURN], and printing just the pages required by selecting 'Print some pages' after pressing [P].

The only problem is that you don't have a template set up ready for you as you would if you'd started a new document. So

here's what to do if you want that template layout.

Edit the existing document and move to the start of a new page with [ALT][RETURN]. Now press [F1] ([I7] in LocoScript 1) and 'Insert text'. Back at the disc manager, select the appropriate TEMPLATE.STD with the cursors and [ENTER]. The template is inserted and you can carry on with the template layout there for you.

T.M. GRIFFITHS,
Wells,
Norfolk

Tippexpertise

Q A problem with the PCW's dot matrix printer is changing the print head for different

thicknesses of paper. The next

adjustment lever settings are nearly impossible to see.

So, a dab of Tipp-Ex or similar on the two parts can help you line up the various settings you need much more easily.

J. WHITFIELD, Cirencester, Glos.

Structural defects

TI've got several Mini Office database files and want to combine them all – unfortunately they're all different structures, and field 4 in one might correspond to field 2 in another. Is there any way I can use 'Append' without having to re-type all the information again?

W Greenhalgh,
Broughton-in-Furness,
Cumbria

8000 PLUS: Weeet, not really, but you might be able to avoid typing the stuff again – if you can bear to spend money on the upgraded but bugged Mini Office Plus!

Stage 1 is to produce ASCII (i.e. plain text) files of your databases, all in the same format (i.e. a simple list or the

information contained in each with a consistent layout). You can do this by making mail merge files of each database, which lets you juggle the order of the fields, and then inserting each of these into a big LocoScript document (the process is described in detail in the 8000 Plus Tipoffs collection book on sale on the Special Offers pages).

Stage 2 is to make an ASCII file of this big Loco document and then import this huge list into Mini Office's database using the 'Import ASCII file' option. Unfortunately this feature is only available on Mini Office Professional Plus, the upgraded version, available from Database (confusingly the name of the company) on 0625 878888. Unfortunately, because there were several bugs in this program which are being put right; no doubt Database can advise you on the latest position.

Boxing shorts



TSome tips for 9512 owners.

- When using bold to enhance a word, change to the next pitch up to prevent the letters being too cramped. So, if in pitch 12, press [+] P 10 [ENTER] before and [-] P after; if in pitch 10, the normal pitch on a 9512, press [+] P 17D [ENTER] before and [-] P after.
- Neat boxes can be printed out by the following sequence of codes. You can copy it into a phrase for B to save time if you need a lot of them. That vertical line is on the keyboard near the L.

```
[.] LS [+] P 15 [ENTER] [SPACE] [-] P 12 [ENTER] [+] UL [SPACE]
[SPACE] [-] UL [-] P [RETURN] [+] LS0 [ENTER] [+] [SPACE]
[RETURN] [.] LS [+] P 15 [ENTER] [SPACE] [-] P 12 [ENTER] [+] UL [SPACE]
[SPACE] [-] UL [-] P [RETURN]
```

It looks a mess on screen, but prints out beautifully!

David Harry, Solihull, West Midlands

My recommendation was:-

```
(-LSpace)(+Pitch11) (+Pitch12) (+UL) __ (-UL) (-Pitch)
{+Space00} | {+Space00}
(-LSpace)(+Pitch11) (+Pitch12) (+UL) __ (-UL) (-Pitch) To wait for further
```

My recommendation was:-

- to wait for further development
- to accept the present occlusion
- extractions: only as an alternative measure
- fixed appliances in- one arch both arches
- functional appliances
- surgery to

It looks a mess on screen, but prints out fine. (It doesn't work on an 8512 or 8256, by the way.)

Depressing news



TIn the March Tipoffs, Mike Bradbury wanted to know how to check if a key has been released, rather than pressed, as with INKEY\$ or INPUT\$. This routine sets up and demonstrates a function USR(0) which is 0 if and only if no key is currently pressed. Including keys like [SPACE], [DEL] but not [STOP]. Just run the program and press some keys!

```
5 c$=CHR$(27)+"H": PRINT CHR$(27)+"E"
10 DATA 54,5d,f3,3e,b3,d3,f0,af,21,f0,3f,06
20 DATA 0b,b6,23,10,fc,12,3e,B4,d3,f0,fb,c9
30 h=HIMEM : MEMORY INT (HIMEM - 25) : DEF USR = HIMEM+1 40 FOR a$=1
TO 24 : READ a$ : POKE HIMEM+a$, VAL ("&H"+a$) : NEXT
50 IF USR(0)<>0 THEN PRINT c$;"key depressed" : ELSE PRINT c$;"key released" :
60 GOTO 50
```

Keith Simons, Cheshire

Error terror

TDisc error messages don't always mean your disc is corrupted – so before you start panicking when the PCW beeps and refuses to acknowledge a disc, check the following list! **MISSING ADDRESS MARKS** Usually just means you've put the disc in the B drive on an

8512, or any drive on a 9512, the wrong way round. **ERROR: OPEN FILE** **NONRECOVERABLE** (filename) Same thing in BASIC. **ERROR: DISK WRITE NO DATA BLOCK** (filename) Not enough room on the disc to copy a file when using PIP – make some space and try again. Kathleen Axe, Birmingham

Mac to PCW

TYou seem to be wrong in suggesting that the only way to transfer files between PCWs and Apple Macs is by cable. A PCW with a 3.5 inch drive fitted can use Moonstone's '2in1' software to read and write discs in IBM PC format. I gather there also exists comparable software to let Macs read and write IBM discs.

London

8000 PLUS: Yes and no: it's possible, but we tried it and have found it expensive and unreliable

at the Mac end. Anyway, Moonstone is on 041 941 3120 and the software costs £25; a 3.5 inch drive costs £140 from the same place; a special board – not software – fitted to the Mac that will let the drive read IBM format discs costs several hundred pounds if you can find one (try Evesham Micros on 0386 765500) or alternatively a new Mac SE can automatically read and write to IBM format discs (prices on application from an Apple dealer in your Yellow Pages). Compare this with the cable-and-comms method that can cost you just £60 (the RS232 for the PCW) and needs no modification of the Mac.

En block

TTwo quick tips on block use in LocoScript. 1) The first time you type the day's date, copy it to a block. (Cursor to the start, press [COPY], cursor to the end, press [COPY] again, then press the number to store it under). From now on [PASTE] then the number you saved it under brings the date back up – until you switch off, which will be at the end of the day, when the date should be wiped anyway.

LocoFile users may find 9 a better number to store it under than 0 as LocoFile offers block 0 to save material into, making it easy to overwrite by mistake. 2) Use COPY rather than CUT when doing block operations – or, in fact, when deleting anything more than a letter. Then merely by pressing [PASTE] and the number you copied into, you have a sort of 'undo' facility to reverse any mistakes you make. David Addis, Fleet, Reading

Ring of confidence

TLocoScript 2's excellent range lacks one important character – a telephone. Here's the pattern for making one using LocoChar. When putting it in a document make it big by putting [+]PPSD before and [-] after. Philip Bailey, Kilmarnock

Excellent Range of symbols i.e. ☎ To save But fear not, Loco

User Character #	Character Number: 17	PS Width: 26 Cols	Character: HIGH	Accent: HIGH
PPSD	0	0	0	0
PPSD	1	1	1	1
PPSD	2	2	2	2
PPSD	3	3	3	3
PPSD	4	4	4	4
PPSD	5	5	5	5
PPSD	6	6	6	6
PPSD	7	7	7	7
PPSD	8	8	8	8
PPSD	9	9	9	9
PPSD	0	0	0	0
PPSD	1	1	1	1
PPSD	2	2	2	2
PPSD	3	3	3	3
PPSD	4	4	4	4
PPSD	5	5	5	5
PPSD	6	6	6	6
PPSD	7	7	7	7
PPSD	8	8	8	8
PPSD	9	9	9	9
PPSD	0	0	0	0
PPSD	1	1	1	1
PPSD	2	2	2	2
PPSD	3	3	3	3
PPSD	4	4	4	4
PPSD	5	5	5	5
PPSD	6	6	6	6
PPSD	7	7	7	7
PPSD	8	8	8	8
PPSD	9	9	9	9
PPSD	0	0	0	0
PPSD	1	1	1	1
PPSD	2	2	2	2
PPSD	3	3	3	3
PPSD	4	4	4	4
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PPSD	1	1	1	1
PPSD	2	2	2	2
PPSD	3	3	3	3
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PPSD	9	9	9	9
PPSD	0	0	0	0
PPSD	1	1	1	1
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PPSD	9	9	9	9
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PPSD	6	6	6	6
PPSD	7	7	7	7
PPSD	8	8	8	8
PPSD	9	9	9	9
PPSD	0	0	0	0
PPSD	1	1	1	1
PPSD	2	2	2	2
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PPSD	0	0	0	0
PPSD	1	1	1	1
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PPSD	8	8	8	8
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PPSD	0	0	0	0
PPSD	1	1	1	1
PPSD	2	2	2	2
PPSD	3	3	3	3
PPSD	4	4	4	4
PPSD	5	5	5	5
PPSD	6	6	6	6
PPSD	7	7	7	7
PPSD	8	8	8	8
PPSD	9	9	9	9
PPSD	0	0	0	0
PPSD	1	1	1	1
PPSD	2	2	2	2
PPSD	3	3	3	3
PPSD	4	4	4	4
PPSD	5	5	5	5
PPSD	6	6	6	6
PPSD	7	7	7	7
PPSD	8	8	8	8
PPSD	9	9	9	9
PPSD	0	0	0	0
PPSD	1	1	1	1
PPSD	2	2	2	2
PPSD	3	3	3	3
PPSD	4	4	4	4
PPSD	5	5	5	5
PPSD	6	6	6	6
PPSD	7	7	7	7
PPSD	8	8	8	8
PPSD	9	9	9	9
PPSD	0	0	0	0
PPSD	1	1	1	1
PPSD	2	2	2	2
PPSD	3	3	3	3
PPSD	4	4	4	4
PPSD	5	5	5	5
PPSD	6	6	6	6
PPSD	7	7	7	7
PPSD	8	8	8	8
PPSD	9	9	9	9
PPSD	0	0	0	0
PPSD	1	1	1</td	

Stock answer

Q Here is how to print out the graphs in 'Stockmarket' when using a dot matrix printer connected to the parallel interface on your PCW 9512.

Copy DEVICE.COM on to the Stockmarket work disc. (Do this by inserting the CP/M disc and typing PIP[RETURN]. At the * type M:=A:DEVICE.COM[RETURN]. When it's finished insert the Stockmarket disc and type A:=M:DEVICE.COM[RETURN].

Then press [STOP].) Then edit the PROFILE.SUB file and add the line DEVICE LST=PAR to the end. (Do this by inserting the CP/M disc and typing BASIC RPED[RETURN]. When the next screen appears insert the Stockmarket disc and select 'Edit' giving PROFILE.SUB as the file to edit. Use the cursors and add the line at the bottom. [EXIT] to save.)

Now the program self-starts and automatically directs all output to the dot matrix.

John Chapman,
Monmouth, Gwent

What's a foot

Q It's possible to use LocoMail to automatically number things in a document in sequence for you - invaluable for footnotes. (This is described in the '8000 Plus Tips Collection' advertised in the Special Offers pages of 8000 Plus).

But if you don't have LocoMail you can still just about do it. Wherever you want a reference number to appear, put [+SR [+P17 [ENTER] [+B [*] B [*] P [*] SR] - it saves time if you put this lot into a phrase.

Before printing out, go to the start of the document and press [FIND]. Give * as the character to find. Go through pressing [FIND] [RETURN] erasing the * and replacing with consecutive numbers.
Ian Ridley,
Brecknell, Berkshire

Make a stand

Q Worried by the price of printer stands? A cheap vegetable rack such as the ones from Argos for £9 work just as well, giving you a place to put all your paper. Put a piece of chipboard on top for the printer and cut a slot to feed the continuous paper through.
Jerome Perkins,
London

Scale modelling

Q What is the Scale Pitch in LocoScript 2 used for? All it appears to do is vary the effective line length.

Eric Revill,
Conwy, Gwynedd

8000 PLUS: What it does is to change the pitch of the ruler line you see at the top of the screen. In scale pitch 12, 12 spaces in the ruler line at the top represent one inch. In scale pitch 17, 17 spaces represent an inch, and so on.

To avoid mess on screen, you should always set the scale pitch to be the same as the main pitch of the layout ([F8] when setting up your layout).

An example should show why. Suppose your scale pitch is 12 and you've set tabs 12 spaces apart (i.e. one inch). But your text is entered in pitch 17 (for a narrow personal organiser page, perhaps). You can get up to 16 characters between tab stops, but on screen LocoScript can't cram them all into the 12 spaces it has between tab stops in the ruler line, leaving a bit of a mess: see the top screen shot.

If, however, you make your layout have scale pitch 17 (the tab stops are now 17 spaces apart - still an inch apart, because of the new scale pitch) then the layout has more room to breathe and the mess relieves itself (see the screen shot at the bottom).

Both print out exactly the same.

(+Pitch17)	North Humberside	David Smith	0482 987177
Leeds	John MacDonald	0432 746737	
Bradford	Mick Wallis-Kay	0577 472828	

With the ruler line set in Scale Pitch 12 but the text in 17 pitch, the tabs are a right mess...

(+Pitch17)	North Humberside	David Smith	0482 987177
Leeds	John MacDonald	0432 746737	
Bradford	Mick Wallis-Kay	0577 472828	

...but with the ruler line in Scale Pitch 17, things look much better

RSXtremely misleading

Q Last month you published a tip by Lloyd Davis on how to load program code into common memory using LDIR. This will not work for all programs and was exactly what the original requester for help said he didn't want! The only way round the problem is to write an RSX (Resident System Extension);

these are automatically loaded into common memory.
Peter Daniels,
Geoff Williams and others

8000 PLUS: Details can be found in the book *The Amstrad CP/M Plus* by Powys-Libbe and Clarke (MML Systems). Or try the book *'PCW Machine Code'* available from various suppliers such as MJ Supplies on 0462 432897.

Making a hash of it

Q To get rid of a menu that appears on screen in LocoScript just press the 'hash' key (number 2 in the keypad down on the bottom right). They disappear by themselves after a few seconds but this is useful for impatient types!
Ian Chisnell,
Bolton

Drop me a line

new sheet as normal. To resellect 6 lines per inch use the command >OC 27,50. It is of course theoretically possible in Protext to select any line spacing you like with the command >OC 27,51,n or >OC 27,65,m where n is the number of 216ths of an inch you want the lines

— This is normal
— line spacing (6/in)

— And this is
— 8 lines per inch,
— while the next...
— is 24 per inch

Protext can print out at virtually any line spacing you wish: shame about the end of page problems though. If you want to print a sheet of A4 at 24 lines to the inch, you're in for a lot of 'waiting for paper'.

Fiddling the accounts

Q Last month there was a useful accounts routine in LocoMail on page 73 ("A good account of himself"). Unfortunately I think you missed out two [RETURN]s, both in the third screen shot. So anyone who can't get their to work should insert a [RETURN] in each of the following two places:
1. After (Unit) and before #ano=no:<:quit=0:again=0
2. After (Unit) and before #cont=1:<stop=0:(-Mail) etc.
Alen Dawson,
Stroud, Gloucester

8000 PLUS: Sorry - in squeezing the screen shot to fit the space it appears that two blank lines were cut out. Our apologies to all those who couldn't get it to work.

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Reading, writing and arithmetic



Can I read and write discs between my 8512, running LocoScript 1, and my 9512, running LocoScript 2?

**JA Street,
Bristol**

8000 PLUS: Yes, but you need two copies of LocoScript 2 – one for your 9512 (which you already have) and one for your 8512 (which you must buy for £25 from Locomotive Software on 0306 740606).

All your LocoScript 1 files will be converted the first time you edit them under Loco 2. Thereafter any files saved

on the B drive of your 8512 can be edited on either the 9512 or the B drive of the 8512.

If you have an 8256, there is a limitation. If a disc has been formatted on an 8256, the 9512's drive can only read it, not write to it; and the 8256 cannot read a 9512 disc. This means you can copy files from your 8256 to the M drive of the 9512 and thence to a 9512 disc, but cannot copy anything from the 9512 to the 8256. However Three Inch Software's rescue kit, £9.95 from them on 01 546 2754, will enable your 9512 to format a disc that can be read and written by both 8256 and 9512.

Life times



I seem to remember reading about a game hidden on the LocoScript disc somewhere called 'Life'. Can you tell me about it?

**Mrs J Barrie,
Birmingham**

8000 PLUS: It isn't a game so much as a sort of computerised fish tank. It's a simple biological simulation of the way bacteria breed. It's often hidden in computer systems as a sort of joke by programmers and it's in MAIL232.COM on your systems disc somewhere.

The simulation works like this. You specify where the bacteria are to start. Then they breed (if there are close enough together). They can die (of

loneliness if one is alone or of overcrowding (if there are three together). Each generation passes and finally you end up with stable repeating patterns.

Here's how to 'play' it. Start up CP/M. (On an 8256 or 8512 now insert your LocoScript disc). Type MAIL232[RETURN]. Wait for the screen to clear and press [I3]. Move the cursor down to the last option 'Transfer as ASCII' and press [EXTRA]P

The screen goes blank apart from a cursor. Now you can set up the bacteria pattern. Use the arrow keys to move the cursor and press [RETURN] where a bacterium is to go. Another [RETURN] deletes a bacterium. Once ready, press [SPACE] and watch the generations roll by...

Double value



You can get a double underlining effect in LocoScript by using the = signs and a bit of cunning.

Before the headline put [+ LP 8 [ENTER]. Type the headline and [RETURN]. Then type as many = signs as letters in the headline. End the line with [+ LS

0 [ENTER] [RETURN].

Make the next line start with [+ P 17 [ENTER], then a space, then [- P. Then type as many = signs as in the headline again (it may look better with one less). Finish with [- LS [- LP [RETURN] and carry on as normal.

Ian Chisnall, Bolton

```
(+LPitch8)IN CASE OF FIRE
=====(*1Space0)
(+Pitch17) (-Pitch)===== (-LSpace) (-LPitch)
```

1. Shout "Fire, fire".
2. Run about in circles waving your arms

Bit complicated on screen...

IN CASE OF FIRE

1. Shout "Fire, fire".
2. Run about in circles waving your arms

...but looks doubly smart on the printout

Securing the locks



In February's Tipoffs (page 73) you published a BASIC routine that automatically selects 'numeric lock' in which letters come out as capitals (abc as ABC) but numbers as numbers (123 as 123) 'postcode fashion'.

Here is the same routine but which selects 'caps lock' (i.e. abc as ABC and 123 as £££).

```
10 FOR a=59 TO 72 : READ b : POKE a,b : NEXT
```

```
20 capslock=59 : CALL capslock
30 DATA 1,32,4,205,90,252,221,0,
205,90,252,218,0,201
unsetting the lock is achieved by
POKE 61,0 : CALL capslock or
by normal keypresses.
```

To make this set numeric lock instead, change the 4 in line 30 to 16.

**EP Morgan,
Sheffield**

M for more safety



It's a good idea to work on files in the M drive, and copy them to disc when you've finished an edit. This is not only faster than working on disc, especially with saving and continuing, but it prevents the possibility of losing your work if the disc decides to

corrupt itself while you're working on the file (it has happened to me twice). So long as you make regular copies to disc you won't have to worry about power failures losing everything in M. Hazel Norrie, Irvine, Ayrshire

M for mystery



When using LocoScript my PCW shows 368K available in drive M. But in CP/M, using SuperCalc, it only shows 112K in M – why?

**Jim Adamson,
Sedgwick,
Cumbria**

8000 PLUS: Very strange: simply some loose connection I suppose, but why it does CP/M and not Loco I've no idea. Rather than poking about yourself, it's probably best to contact your friendly local computer shop.

Colour my world



You can make discs easier to pick out from the piles on your desk by colour-coding them. Small coloured stickers are available from stationers and can be put on the spine of the discs – green for LocoScript data discs, red for startup discs, yellow for games and so on.



Ian Chisnall,
Bolton

Putting on the pounds



How on earth can I get a £ sign to print out in SuperCalc? All I can get are # marks. Why?

**David Lester,
London**

8000 PLUS: The confusion arises because computers, although invented in the UK, were developed in the US where they don't have a £ sign. When the Americans came to make a code to represent all letters and characters, they got all the alphabet (a is 97, b is 98 and so on) but forgot about the £, which has to share the same code as the hash

sign. Therefore confusion can arise depending on whether a program is set to interpret that code in the American way, as #, or in the British way, as £.

Anyway, to get £ signs printed out in SuperCalc, and not # marks, here is what to do. When you are printing out you will go through a sequence like /Output, Display, All, then the choices are P for print or S for setup. Choose S, and then type [EXIT] R3 [RETURN]

The last menu is returned, and you can now press P for print. This has set up the UK character set, and you should now see £s not #'s on the screen.

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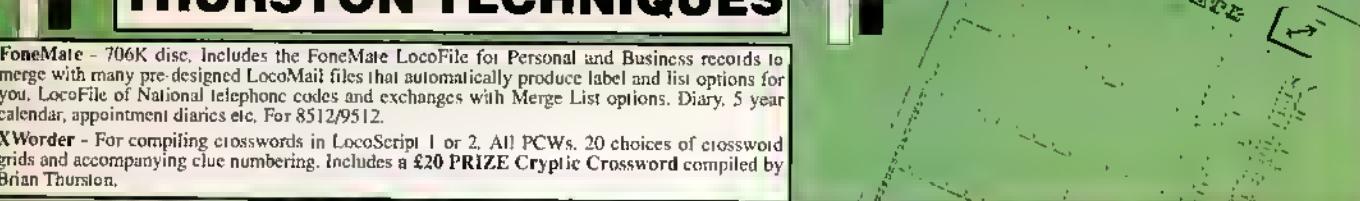
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Suitable for all word processing. Versions for all character pitch sizes, for 'Landscape' printing and mini planner TempMates. PCW 8256/8512 users should ask for the Standard version. Place the grid over your layout or letterhead and correct positions for Margins, Tabulation and Lines are clearly indicated. It's so simple it doesn't need further explanation!

'like many simple things extremely useful' BBC CEEFAX.

"excellent" Comp. WAPCW Sept 1987. "wonderfully simple idea" You APCW Jan 1987. "excellent, there are a number of word processing aids of this kind on the market but this is the best I have seen" APCW Aug 1987.

'a place first line think of all those trees you could save' 8000 Plus Dec 1986.

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The Page Boy word processing ruler is a clear PVC ruler which measures characters per inch at 17, 15, 12, 10, 5 (10d), 6 & 7 1/2 and lines per inch at 5, 6, 7 1/2 and 8. It also includes a centimetre line and the 10" line doubles as an inch measure. In total it has 13 options.

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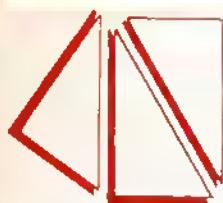
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All options are menu driven, so are simple to operate.
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No Disc Swapping



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These pages provide a comprehensive guide to the Amstrad PCW software. Published in three monthly parts, this time it's the turn of Word Processors (including Desk Top Publishers), Accounts/Payroll packages and Utilities. We've set out to cover every important piece of software we could lay our hands on, and to give you enough information to decide whether they are suitable for you.

All software will run on both the 9512 and the 8000 series machines, though the former's daisywheel printer cannot print graphical output.

The selection isn't comprehensive, but the software listed here represents what we think is the best of that currently available.

As well as a brief summary of what they do, the main Plus and Minus points for each program are listed – Pluses have a ▲ by them, Minuses a ▼. Those we think are particularly noteworthy have a corner flash.

Have fun window shopping!

Word Processors

PROTEXT/POCKET PROTEXT

£59.95/£29.95 • Armor • 0733 68909

The best CPM wordprocessor. Very fast at moving around large files, and packed with features. Works with key combinations rather than menus, but uses LocoScript keys too. Comes complete with a good spelling checker, a lightning fast word counter and a very powerful mailmerger. Pocket Protext is a stripped down version – essentially the same word processing features, but no spell checker or mailmerger, and lacking one or two incidental facilities like two column printing. Specify which machine you have when buying.

PLUSES · MINUSES

- ▲ Complete with spelling checker/word counter
- ▲ Packed with features, eg. calculate facility, text editor for writing programs, 'print to screen' option etc.
- ▲ Lets you work with two documents at once
- ▲ You can do all of CPM's functions without leaving Protext
- ▲ Very fast at moving around, doing exchanges and so on
- ▲ Extremely powerful and flexible mailmerge
- ▼ Forces you to learn another new set of control keys to use it
- ▼ Not as slick as LocoScript in its printer controls

TASWORD 8000

£24.95 • Tasman • 0532 438301 • 8000's only

Simplifies document planning by minimising dependency on layout procedures. Allows quick and easy access to parts of text by existence of a marker system. The 'Search' and 'Find/Replace' facilities are simple to use, but very thorough.

PLUSES · MINUSES

- ▲ Easy to use
- ▲ Excellent mailmerge and label-printing ability

EASY LABELLER

£29.95 (plus VAT) • M.A.S.S. • 0603 630768

Labelling program which stores your names and address lists and will print out in label format selected items from it.

PLUSES · MINUSES

- ▲ Useful options like printing out current date
- ▲ Good search facilities
- ▲ Range of printing options will fit most stationery
- ▼ Data needs an entire disc to itself
- ▼ Data entry is slowed by constant returning to main menu

LOCOSCRIPT 2

£24.95 • Locomotive Software • 0806 740008

As bundled with new 9512, the new version of everyone's first word processor! If you know how LocoScript 1 works, you'll have minimal relearning to do, and it puts right (almost) all the defects of the old version at a rock bottom price. Greek and Cyrillic alphabets, and even lets you define up to sixteen characters of your own design.

PLUSES · MINUSES

- ▲ 'Find page' command makes moving around faster

- ▲ Superb range of foreign accents and symbols available
- ▲ Can now drive daisywheel and other printers
- ▲ Has DISKEDIT's formatting and copying built into it
- ▲ New 300-page manual
- ▼ Mailmerger and spelling checker not included
- ▼ Inconvenient for regular CPM users
- ▼ Still no word counter
- ▼ Still slow at Find, Exchange and scrolling

LOCOSPELL

£19.95 • Locomotive/Amsoft • 0306 740606

The ultimate spelling checker for LocoScript users. It is run as a simple menu choice while you are editing a document normally, and you can check either an entire document or only a paragraph. When it finds an error, it suggests a correction. Reasonably fast, given LocoScript's inherent sloth.

PLUSES · MINUSES

- ▲ Runs totally from within LocoScript
- ▲ Can do small sections of a file
- ▲ Suggests alternatives for misspelt words
- ▲ Reformats the text as it makes corrections
- ▲ Provides the much-missed LocoScript word counter
- ▼ Can't remove spellings you don't like
- ▼ The manual gets bogged down sometimes
- ▼ Slow at scrolling the dictionary window

LOCOMAIL

£29.95 • Locomotive/Amsoft • 0306 740606

As a mailmerger for LocoScript, it's difficult to see how anything could be better than this. It runs directly from LocoScript, and can process any LocoScript commands. Has many advanced features and is highly recommended for all LocoScript users.

PLUSES · MINUSES

- ▲ You don't have to run it from CPM
- ▲ Can print any LocoScript text formatting commands
- ▲ Can automatically rejustify paragraphs after insertion
- ▲ Can insert numeric calculations into letters
- ▲ Can read data from non-LocoScript (ie. ASCII) files
- ▲ Large manual, with example files on disc
- ▲ Powerful selection procedures - like a database
- ▼ Need separate program to sort and filter addresses before a print run

PROSPELL

£29.95 • Armor • 0733 68909

A stand-alone spell checker for use with almost any wordprocessor that runs on the PCWs. Reads LocoScript, WordStar and ASCII files, and allows you to make corrections directly. View the context, change the dictionary etc. Specify which machine when buying.

PLUSES · MINUSES

- ▲ Checks LocoScript and WordStar documents directly.
- ▲ Displays the context of a suspect word
- ▲ Can edit misspellings directly from Prospell
- ▲ Anagram and crossword solver too
- ▼ Processes files of 15K or more in sections

POCKET WORDSTAR

£49.95 • MicroPro/Davis Rubin • 0386 853610

For many business users, word processing means Word Star. Almost everything you could need in a text processor is here and despite the title this 'Pocket' version has all the features of the original. Efficient and proven, but now showing its age.

and there are alternatives unless you are committed to WordStar already. £20 extra buys the De Luxe version with spell checker.

PLUSES · MINUSES

- ▲ Probably the world's most widely used word-processor
- ▲ Documentation is complex but well-structured
- ▲ Includes a mail merge utility
- ▲ Keystroke commands fully described on on-screen menus
- ▼ Doesn't make full use of the PCW keyboard and printer
- ▼ Page and margin formatting commands awkward to use

NEWWORD

£69.00 • NewStar Software • 0245 265017

NewWord exploits the WordStar market by doing the same job better. It uses much the same key commands as WordStar and will even edit documents prepared under WordStarComes with a spelling checker, and the on-screen help is slightly better than WordStar's, though the keystrokes are still as obscure.

PLUSES · MINUSES

- ▲ Does everything WordStar does, even reads WordStar files
- ▲ Spelling checker included
- ▲ Can underline words and lines
- ▲ Onscreen help better than WordStar's
- ▲ Full reformatting of text within mailmerge
- ▼ Weak on use of keypad and printer support
- ▼ Like WordStar, formatting troubles and obscure commands

LABEL PRINTER

£25.00 • Microdraw • 0622 685481

Very similar program to Easy Labeller if not quite as powerful. Usual features of a labeller and you can store comments with each label's data.

PLUSES · MINUSES

- ▲ Menus simple – easy to get the program going
- ▲ Fast data entry
- ▲ Can store comments with each entry
- ▼ No import or export of data
- ▼ Data needs an entire disc to itself

LOCOKEY

£14.95 • Locomotive Software • 0306 740606

This successor to LocoChai is a keyboard customiser which means that any key can be made to produce any letter. The program will reproduce any one of the sixteen LocoChai-defined characters.

PLUSES · MINUSES

- ▲ Enables customisation to any distribution of keyboard letters
- ▲ Handles any combinations of accent and character
- ▲ Is fun and easy to use
- ▼ Will only be of limited use

ANSIBLEINDEX PLUS

£34.95 • Ansible Information • 0672 62576

The upgraded version of the LocoScript document indexer. Type in your LocoScript document as normal highlighting the words to be indexed with a LocoScript (~RV) code. The program will then compile an alphabetical list of entries complete with the page number on which they appear. A friendly, useful little package.

PLUSES · MINUSES

- ▲ Don't need to convert files into ASCII files
- ▲ Word counter also included
- ▲ Runs with both LocoScript 1 and 2

SOFTWARE GUIDE

- ▲ One index can be created for a series of documents
- ▲ Indexes can be edited on screen
- ▲ Index entries can be inverted; instead of 'mutton pie,' for example, 'pie, mutton.'



VITAL PROCESSOR SERIES

Easy to use

£29.95 - 39.95 each • Vital Software • 0732 810330

Series of three programs designed to help you look after your money and your assets. The Savings Processor is ideal for someone with a portfolio of stocks and shares; it tells you your 'net worth' like a balance sheet. The Insurance Processor helps you make an inventory of all your possessions and put a value on them, while the Income Processor helps you keep tabs on your incomings and outgoings.

PLUSES - MINUSES

- ▲ Income Processor allows you to budget efficiently
- ▲ Insurance Processor can complete inventories room by room
- ▲ Savings Processor is a fast and efficient way of keeping track of share values
- ▼ You have to be keen to do all the research
- ▼ It can be time-consuming
- ▼ With the Income Processor, it's difficult getting all the information you need from the manual
- ▼ It's not always clear how some of the operations work

CHECK ACCOUNT II

£14.95 • Molesoft • 03722 75053

Written specifically for the home user, this program maintains four accounts per disc in familiar bank-statement form. Its analysis feature shows trends and forecasts how much you can afford to spend. The interest-estimating feature can keep track of Building Society accounts where interest earned varies with the amount deposited.

PLUSES - MINUSES

- ▲ Designed solely for home accounts
- ▲ Easy to learn from demo file
- ▼ Relatively slow screen update
- ▼ You have to be organised to keep it up to date

DIGITAL BUSINESS CONTROLLER

Easy to use

£69.95 • Digital International • 0395 270273

Not a full accounting system, but a very easy-to-use package with an excellent manual. Nominal ledger already set up and you can be up and running in minutes. No aged creditor/debtor lists can be produced, and problems with VAT handling—not really for VAT businesses. For other small business it's very good value.

PLUSES - MINUSES

- ▲ Delightful to use with a very good manual
- ▲ You can get the system working in minutes
- ▲ Financial ratios can be included in reports
- ▼ No facility for producing aged debtors/creditors list

BOOK-KEEPING AND ACCOUNTS

£69 (with invoicing, £80.50; with invoicing and stocks, £92) • Manx Tapes • 0624 813071

Recently updated suite of programs advocating a very traditional style of double-entry book-keeping. Useful demonstration disc also supplied with more than 200 example accounts.

PLUSES - MINUSES

- ▲ Solid, traditional approach to double-entry book-keeping
- ▼ Program doesn't make full use of the PC
- ▼ Screen prompts not always that helpful
- ▼ Written in BASIC, so prone to sluggishness

COMPACT ACCOUNTS

£199.00 • Compact Software Ltd • 0703 611214

Another very large integrated package supplied on several discs and consisting of sales, purchase and nominal ledger together with invoicing. The package is available on much larger micros, and since the format in which data is produced is the same as on PCWs, the system is particularly suitable for users planning to upgrade their hardware at a later date.

PLUSES - MINUSES

- ▲ Audit trails are an auditor's dream
- ▲ Data can be used in WordStar, Multiplan or SuperCalc 2
- ▲ Superb prepayment facility
- ▲ Can run a number of companies separately
- ▼ Easily transported to bigger computers
- ▼ Lots of disc swapping necessary
- ▼ Can be slow to use—it runs in Mallard Basic
- ▼ Quirks in cash allocation routine and account code system

M.A.P. INTEGRATED ACCOUNTS

Powerful

£249+VAT • MAP Systems • 061 624 5662/3

This is a very powerful package moved onto the PCW at a fraction of its cost on larger micros. The size makes it a little cumbersome to use, but apart from that there are very few significant problems. The integrated suite includes the same five modules as Camsoft, but they are supplied on four sides of disc, making it effectively impossible for the software to be run as an integrated system on an unexpanded 8256.

PLUSES - MINUSES

- ▲ A very comprehensive and professional package
- ▲ Very good audit trails
- ▲ Sales/purchase ledgers can run over different periods
- ▲ Facility for handling prepayments and accruals
- ▲ Able to print full management accounts
- ▼ The size of the programs means lots of disc swapping
- ▼ All normal responses need to be in upper case

CORNIX SIMPLE ACCOUNTS

£69.95 • Cornix • 0234 219969

Simple cash-book style package which allows you to keep track of debtors and creditors (though not aged ones). Simple to use and you can make changes if you make a mistake. Slow to use for complex operations and number of entries in given period is limited, but very good simple program for small businesses.

PLUSES - MINUSES

- ▲ Simple, easy-to-use program
- ▲ Can correct errors
- ▲ Keeps track of debtors and creditors
- ▼ Slow for complex operations
- ▼ Ability to alter figures won't please accounting purists

CAMSOFT PSIL

£180.14+VAT • Cambrian Software • 0766 831878

Consists of five integrated packages: Sales, purchase and nominal ledgers, invoicing and stock control. In terms of sophistication it falls somewhere between the Sagesoft package and the larger systems from MAP and Compact. But it's easier to run than the larger packages since all the software can be squeezed into the M drive. Good package for a small company.

PLUSES - MINUSES

- ▲ Already set up for 8256 or 8512
- ▲ No need for pre-printed stationery
- ▲ Excellent sort and search facilities
- ▲ Invoices shown on screen as you create them
- ▼ Constant need to input full five digit account codes
- ▼ No final accounts reports available on nominal ledger
- ▼ No facility to run the ledgers in different accounting periods

IN BUSINESS

£149.90 • Cavalier Software • 01-639 6683

A comprehensive integrated package. Comprises 'Inact' accounts and 'Instock' stock control, available separately for £59.95 each. Well designed, easy to run and powerful enough for most businesses.

PLUSES - MINUSES

- ▲ Other packages (eg: 'Telaadd' address book) can be added
- ▲ Comprehensive range of features when used as a package
- ▲ Sophisticated pricing and order features in Instock section
- ▲ Flexible accounts, traps most mistakes, useful summaries
- ▲ Invoicing, forward planning facility in stock control
- ▼ Manual gives you a confusing number of options

SMALL BUSINESS ACCOUNTS

£69.95 • NewStar • 0245 265017

Using the split-screen method, the prompt-driven program leads you through the hazards of double-entry book-keeping as painlessly as possible. Again, very useful demonstration files supplied with the program. It also handles VAT easily.

PLUSES - MINUSES

- ▲ Excellent system of screen prompts
- ▲ Good demonstration files
- ▲ One of the easiest double-entry systems for the novice
- ▼ Manual is really for the PC

SAGE ACCOUNTS

£87 • Sagesoft • 091 2131555

An integrated accounts package consisting of purchase, sales and nominal ledgers. For another £50 you can buy Accounts Plus which also has invoicing and stock control. Aimed at small companies with the emphasis on ease of setting up. But a number of limitations, eg, the package cannot cope too easily with rapidly increasing numbers of customers and suppliers.

PLUSES - MINUSES

- ▲ Clean, tidy and logical screen layouts and menus
- ▲ Easy to set up and use with excellent documentation
- ▲ Good audit trails and VAT reports
- ▲ Can produce formatted trial balances
- ▼ Restrictive account numbering system
- ▼ Only single Nominal ledger and VAT analysis per item
- ▼ Does not cater for settlement discounts
- ▼ Won't print remittance advice slips
- ▼ Cramped on 9512 printer—need 17 pitch daisywheel

M.A.P. PAYROLL

£199+VAT • MAP Systems • 061 624 5662

PLUSES - MINUSES

- ▲ Can amend and re-run at any stage (even after printing)
- ▲ Cash history is broken down into departments
- ▲ System pivots re-use or amendment of leavers
- ▲ Can hold up to 40 standard hourly and weekly wage rates
- ▼ No SSP calculation facility (but can record all amounts paid)
- ▼ Programs necessitate a lot of disc swapping
- ▼ No printed record of automatic tax code changes

SAGESOFT POPULAR PAYROLL

£61 • Sagesoft • 091 2131555

PLUSES - MINUSES

- ▲ Any or all employees payroll can be run at any stage
- ▲ Full pay history available for all employees and leavers
- ▲ Calculates average pay for holidays etc
- ▲ Very easy to install
- ▼ Limited number of add-ons/deductions
- ▼ Doesn't print a list of cheques
- ▼ No analysis of additions/deductions

COMPACT PAYROLL

£135.00 • Compact Software Ltd • 0703 611214

PLUSES - MINUSES

- ▲ Supplied with test data
- ▲ Facility to change employees tax codes following budget
- ▲ Can run payroll for several companies
- ▲ Program available for PC compatibles—data transportable
- ▼ Must be run from the master discs
- ▼ Needs input form and check calculation for each employee
- ▼ Once pay slips are printed nothing can be changed
- ▼ Most expensive payroll program

CAMSOFT PAYROLL

£60+VAT • Cambrian Software • 0766 831878

PLUSES - MINUSES

- ▲ Full pay slip displayed on screen, any item can be amended
- ▲ Facility for freehand narrative on any pay slip
- ▲ Uses M drive for programs to speed operation
- ▲ Built-in on-screen help facility
- ▲ Search-sort routine for output to screen, printer or disc
- ▲ Uses alphanumeric employee codes
- ▼ Screen menus a bit untidy and sometimes difficult to follow
- ▼ No listing of cheques

CHECK ACCOUNT TWO

£14.95 • Molesoft • 0372 275053

Written specifically to keep track of personal household accounts. Can store the details of up to four different accounts per disc, records all withdrawals and deposits and will allow an inspection of the current state of any account at any time. It also reveals both the minimum and maximum figures to which the balance has either sunk or risen over previous or current months. Also incorporated are comprehensive interest-calculating options. A solid, competent package.

PLUSES - MINUSES

- ▲ No double-entry book-keeping or VAT returns to wrestle with
- ▲ Very easy to use
- ▲ Carries last month's spending levels forward into this month
- ▲ Tiered interest rate option available

EASI-ACCOUNTS SYSTEM

£23.95 • Arctan Computer Ventures • 1 Foxwell Square, Southfields, Northampton NN3 5AT

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SOFTWARE GUIDE

Another PCW accounts package this time for the small business man or the very organised home user. Works on the traditional system of ledgers with up to 500 entries (or individual transactions) allowed per ledger.

PLUSSES · MINUSES

- ▲ Comprehensive List and Search facilities
- ▲ Manual assumes you know nothing about accounting and is, on the whole, well-written
- ▼ Not a particularly easy package to use
- ▼ You would have to be exceptionally well-organised to use it

MONEY MANAGER PCW

£49.95 • Connect Software Ltd • 01 743 9792

This accounting package has been designed for individuals, small businesses and clubs – anyone who might find a larger accounting package daunting. The program concentrates on income and expenditure, each file covering a 12-month period with up to 500 entries per month.

PLUSSES · MINUSES

- ▲ Up to 20 different kinds of accounts are catered for
- ▲ Up to 50 transaction codes help categorise income and expenditure
- ▲ Needs little computer accounting expertise
- ▲ Information can be displayed in the form of a bar or pie chart
- ▼ Too limited for bigger businesses
- ▼ Over-featured for domestic use

DG PAYROLL

£39.95 (£79.95 for DG Payroll Plus) • Digital International • 0395 270273

A computerised payroll program for the small PCW-based business which covers all PAYE, Statutory Sick Pay and Statutory Maternity Pay requirements. The package can handle up to a hundred employees and their pay requirements whether they are weekly-paid or salaried staff.

PLUSSES · MINUSES

- ▲ Good menu arrangement
- ▲ Automatic calculation of deductions: SSP, etc
- ▲ End of year routine could save time
- ▼ Understanding and experience of PAYE is essential
- ▼ Basic version of software needs frequent updating
- ▼ Won't save the smaller company any time

Utilities

BRAINSTORM

£29.99 • Brainstorm Software Ltd • 0895 677845

A new improved version, reconfigured for easier use on the PCW. Works as an 'ideas processor'; you throw your ideas in any order and then use the program to rearrange them and impose a structure.

PLUSSES · MINUSES

- ▲ Quick and efficient and easy to use
- ▲ Encourages structured thinking
- ▲ Versatile; many different editing facilities
- ▲ Results can be fed into a word processor for polishing up
- ▼ Namesakes must be exact matches
- ▼ Manual is on disc, so you can't consult while using BrainStorm unless you print it out

PCW DRAW

£39.95 • HTB Computing • 0794 516279

Drafting package written specifically for the PCW machines. Program is learning with features built-in shapes and free-hand drawing facility which, used with practice and imagination, could provide professional-looking output.

PLUSSES · MINUSES

- ▲ Very comprehensive text entry and printout format options
- ▲ ZOOM facility allows you to edit small sections of a draught pixel by pixel
- ▲ Many useful functions: different line thicknesses, hatching, etc
- ▼ No support for plotting devices like mouse or light-pen
- ▼ PCW Draw doesn't consider the PCW's screen aspect ratio: on-screen drawings look twice as high as wide

PCW TOOLKIT

£24.95 • Moonstone Computing • 041 941 3120

A user-friendly data recovery package for the PCW. Provided you can find the contents of the damaged file, roll out a new one, sector by sector, on M using PASTE.

PLUSSES · MINUSES

- ▲ Perfect for the complete novice

- ▲ Clear, confidence-boosting manual
- ▲ Can recover data varying in amounts from a few bytes to a complete disc.

PRO-PERFORMER

£59.90 • Electromusic Research • 0702 335747

The only real musical add-on for the PCW. Easy to use software runs on CP/M, has a wide variety of powerful features and is icon-driven. Sophisticated recording facilities and the program will allow you to save compositions as tracks, songs or performances. Ideal for pop and classical musicians.

PLUSSES · MINUSES

- ▲ Icon-based screen
- ▲ Can record lines independently or in an arrangement
- ▲ Punch-In editing facilities
- ▲ Facility for slow recording and fast playback
- ▲ Step-time recording for strict tempo lines
- ▲ Tracks can be looped (made to repeat)
- ▼ Manual glosses over arrangements
- ▼ Can't edit notes individually
- ▼ No musical notation anywhere

JOB ESTIMATING & PRODUCT COSTING

£79.90 each • Cornix Software • 0243 219969

Both programs aim to provide help to small businesses by keeping track of costs. You break down the product you're costing or the job you're doing into a series of costing lines – recording quantity and price per component. Program analyses profit margins and can produce customer printouts.

PLUSSES · MINUSES

- ▲ Excellent, well-written manuals
- ▲ Simple and robust to use
- ▲ Changes in material costs instantly reflected in all quotes
- ▲ Neat way of doing on-the-spot quotes
- ▼ Only suitable for small to medium-sized businesses
- ▼ Can't add new components to a description



TEMPDISC 8.2

£19.95 • Thurston Techniques 0395 277496 • 8512s only

Disc of ready-made templates to be used inside LocoScript 2. All you have to do is find the particular template to suit your requirements and then fill in the details. Vast selection of borders is excellent for personalising labels and envelopes.

PLUSSES · MINUSES

- ▲ Has included files to complement LocoMail's invoicing facilities
- ▲ Very easy to use
- ▲ Vast range of templates available
- ▼ Not so good if you don't like lots of visual trimmings

FORMS BOX COMPENDIUM

£19.95 • Disc Design • 0337 7444

Fully compatible with LocoScript 1 and 2, this disc provides 70 different kinds of forms for home and office use. You can either fill them in on the screen, save and print them out or print them out and fill them in later. A solid, no frills product.

PLUSSES · MINUSES

- ▲ Very easy to use
- ▼ Will only print out on A4 size paper

POOLS PREDICTOR

£19.95 • Infraset Ltd • 02572 76800

This program helps you select the numbers to cross on your pool's coupon taking its recommendations on the recent form of each team or simply on the basis of sequence prediction (going on the numbers which have provided draws in the past).

PLUSSES · MINUSES

- ▲ Very easy to use
- ▲ More accurate than the newspaper pundits
- ▼ Entering form results from week to week is tedious

LOCOFONT I

£19.95 • Locomotive Software (0306 740606) • 8000s only

A selection of new fonts to help you break out of the standard LocoScript typeface. There's a very good selection of styles to choose from: 'handwritten' styles look very good as do the Copperplate and Script styles. The Roman and Standard fonts are more practical. The new characters are reproduced

very well indeed. A further six fonts are available, including Old English and flowing script, on LocoFont II for £14.95.

PLUSSES · MINUSES

- ▲ Eight new fonts, one coming for free
- ▲ Each style supports all accents, characters, etc.
- ▲ Relatively cheap and easy to use
- ▲ Can break out of that one-pattern printout.
- ▼ Can't mix styles in one document
- ▼ Limitation of 16 dot pattern means that the quality cannot be brilliant

PS HEADINGS

£11.95 • Orb Systems • 01 690 8534

An updated version of the original product, with a major improvement in speed. A must for all Protext users who need to incorporate high quality large print for letter headings and so on. Facility to alter stylistic details such as shading, underlining and triple-strike printing.

PLUSSES · MINUSES

- ▲ Easy to use
- ▲ Range of styles
- ▲ Good manual
- ▼ Only one font available (although in two sizes)

TAS-SIGN

£29.95 • Tasman Software • 0532 438301

Takes time to print out but you can print signs of up to five lines of text up to seven inches high with up to 32 characters in each. Four fonts, eight hatching patterns, and you can print lengthways on continuous paper for long signs.

PLUSSES · MINUSES

- ▲ Wide range of fonts and shadings
- ▲ Long signs will print out in 'landscape' (sideways) format
- ▼ Long signs take time
- ▼ Some symbols (yen signs etc) won't print out on PCW

GILLIGAN'S GUIDE

£29.95 - 49.95 • NG Gilligan • 0629 56347

A geographic information program based on the Ordnance Survey system. Concentrates on a given area loosely 15 square miles; it will list all the places included on the map in alphabetical order with their grid references. Also gives you information about the sites and will locate them on the map. You can also interrogate the system so that it only gives you details and locations of sites of special interest.

PLUSSES · MINUSES

- ▲ A thorough, versatile and easy to use package
- ▲ System can be interrogated in a number of interesting ways
- ▲ Breaks sites down into areas of specific interest
- ▲ You can commission your own made-to-measure guides

STAR TRACK

£14.95 • Discovery Software • 01 840 5252

A fun and informative program with which you can display on your computer screen all of the 88 constellations and 600 or so stars that are recognised by today's astronomers. You can also see how their positions in the sky change depending on your location (which could be anywhere in the world) and the time (anytime between 1000 and 2999 AD).

PLUSSES · MINUSES

- ▲ Excellent manual with helpful practice exercises
- ▲ Comprehensive list of ready-made latitudes and longitudes supplied
- ▲ Cycle option transports you forward a month at a time so that you can chart the stars' progress
- ▼ Screen displays could be more exciting
- ▼ Moon and planets aren't included

POCKET DATADATE

£24.95 • A4 Ideas • 0249 815082

An invaluable utility for those who crave date-related trivia. Fully operational under LocoScript 2, Pocket Datadate even prints teletext-sized text.

PLUSSES · MINUSES

- ▲ Program recently updated
- ▲ Very informative
- ▲ Ideal for quizmasters
- ▼ Only works with LocoScript 2
- ▼ Documentation currently on disc

PCW SUPERDOS

£29.95 • Encyclasoft • 0270 811890

Fills the gap between the friendliness of LocoScript and sparsity of CP/M. Has the ability to copy multiple files at once, and can back up an entire directory.

PLUSSES · MINUSES

- ▲ Printable 'notepad' facility

SOFTWARE GUIDE

- ▲ Makes CP/M less daunting to use
- ▼ Need to leave SuperDOS for some functions

FACTOTUM

£14.95 • Tudor Systems • 0622 861775

The combination of LocoScript 2, LocoFile and LocoMail will give you access to this extremely useful catalogue of information. As well as a diary, incorporating special date reminders, there is an address and telephone list, and a tax planner.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Works from LocoScript
- ▲ Very efficient letters section
- ▲ Easy to use
- ▼ Poor presentation
- ▼ Won't work with an unexpanded 8256
- ▼ Assumes knowledge of LocoScript

SUPERZAP

Public Domain • Various suppliers

A disc editor with a difference - one key command taken from adequate menus permit easy operation. Superzap allows you to examine both the structure and contents of the M: Drive. Lack of print function is an irritating pitfall - this command is even disabled in CP/M.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Very easy to use
- ▲ Fast 'find' function
- ▼ No copies
- ▼ Numbers can only be entered in hex

DATA DIARY

£16.95 • A4 Ideas • 0249 815082

More PCW-generated diary inserts for use at home or in the office. The program works from within LocoScript so you can make use of all LocoScript 2's text and style enhancements. Inserts feature year to a page calendars, month at a glance planners and page a day formats.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Buy it at any time of the year and you will be supplied with next 12 months' supply
- ▲ 2 versions available - for A4-size and Filofax-size printout
- ▲ A solid, no-frills product that's easy to use

INVESTOR

£29.95 • B & BB Software • 0240 242946

Program has been designed to assist the share-owner in the management of a portfolio and to help in the choice of shares to buy and sell. It allows up to 300 stocks, shares or unit trusts to be kept in its library. Stocks are listed in order of their performance and you can call up graphs of price movement for individual stocks.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Manual is very easy to follow
- ▲ Records share-holdings, dividends and cash accounts
- ▲ Dividend printout for tax purposes
- ▲ Four methods of share price analysis
- ▼ No ability to calculate taxable gains
- ▼ Graphs are small and lack expansion facility
- ▼ 9512 owners won't be able to print out the graphics

PERSONAL TAX PLANNER

£24.95 • Digma International • 0395 270273

Simple program which asks you all the questions relevant to your year's tax affairs, and prepares your tax return claim (or bill). Can, for example, find out whether married couples would be better assessed separately or not. Personal Tax Planner is updated every year - look out for the most recent version following March's budget.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Simple to use
- ▲ Needs a minimum knowledge of the tax law
- ▲ Forces you to keep your tax details in one place
- ▼ Limited application - might only use it once a year
- ▼ Can't handle unusual cases
- ▼ Program updates (for a new allowance level) cost £10

KNIFE PLUS

£19.95 • Hisoft • 0525 718181

An essential tool for retrieving data from corrupted discs. Knife Plus will copy all uncorrupted sectors onto a fresh disc which you can then patch up without risking the original.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Copies all uncorrupted data from damaged discs
- ▲ If boot sector damaged, will copy good boot sector onto disc
- ▼ Requires some knowledge of basic disc structure
- ▼ Manual not written for beginners

WISE ONE

£34.95 • Swallowsoft Publications • 0420 63793

An expert system - you input rules and information and Wise One becomes an 'intelligent' program which can, for example, do simple diagnoses according to symptoms you type in. From PO Box 107, Walton on Thames, Surrey KT12 5PQ.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Power to be genuinely useful
- ▲ Elementary arithmetic
- ▲ Help screens can be set up for the user
- ▼ Obscure way of writing rules - need programming instinct
- ▼ Manual dry and academic

FLIPPER 2 PLUS

£29.95 • Software Imperative • 0225 425315 •

9512/8512 only.



Can do everything the original Flipper did, and more. You can now flip Mini Office and LocoFile and will have no problems with whatever version of LocoScript you're using.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Easier to install than its predecessor
- ▲ Can flip between environments in as little as 2 seconds
- ▲ Professionally-presented documentation
- ▲ Works with most CP/M programs, LocoScript and BASIC
- ▼ Still won't work with many self-loading games
- ▼ Be careful of state of printer and disc drives when flipping.

SUPER TYPE II

£14.95 • Digma International • 0395 270273

A program for users of LocoScript and CP/M programs, which modifies the fonts used by the PCW printer. SuperType has 4 'business' and 'novelty' fonts. It works by directly altering the relevant files for LocoScript or CP/M, so you only need run it once - after that, the new chosen font is available.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Once installed, you can totally forget it's there
- ▲ Genuinely useful range of fonts available
- ▲ All LocoScript's print size and style options still work
- ▼ You can't mix different fonts in the same document

DATAFAX

Basic version £39.95 (with Microfile

£49.95 with mouse £79.95) • Kempston Data •

0234 841224

Used with personal ring-binder, it helps you keep track of names, addresses and appointments. Prints out data in a form that will fit the envelope organiser.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Flexible and easy to use; saves buying inserts
- ▼ Not very sophisticated: keeping it up to date is tedious

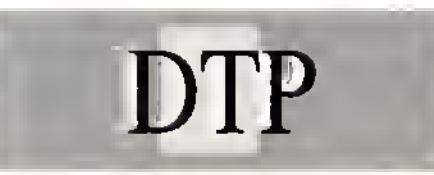
DHCP 12-TRACK SEQUENCER SOFTWARE

£45 • DHCP • 0440 61207

The second add-on 'recording studio' for the PCW consisting of MIDI interface and software. Can cope with up to 12 tracks, all of which are polyphonic and which can be as long as the PCW memory allows. Can also cope with quite advanced instruments.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Cheaper than its competitor
- ▲ Tracks can be bounced to enable several tracks to all be put into one
- ▲ Looping can start/end at any bar
- ▲ Add-ons available for Casio and Korg synthesizers
- ▼ Manual is skimpy
- ▼ No editing possible without re-recording whole tracks



FLEET STREET EDITOR PLUS

£49.95 • Mirrosoft • 01 928 1454

Versatile and powerful package. You can create template-like 'page dummies' if you use several pages of the same format, and handling of text, setting of margins and size of text boxes etc, is well controlled.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Versatile integrated package
- ▲ Text handling and editing sophisticated and controlled
- ▲ Can set up page dummies for regularly used formats
- ▼ Odd use of memory in text editor
- ▼ Still lots of serious bugs even now and crashes occasionally

NEWSDESK INTERNATIONAL

£25 (with lightpen £50) • The Electric Studio •

0462 420222

Versatile package with a very wide range of graphics facilities and high quality headline text. Page make-up is flexible, though the program can be a bit cumbersome, mainly in text handling. Same graphics facilities as Electric Studio's 'Art' package which it supersedes.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Good control over the elements on the page
- ▲ Powerful graphics facilities
- ▲ Good quality print in headlines and large fonts
- ▲ Can use font editor to create your own high quality fonts
- ▼ Text-handling slow and cumbersome; editing is difficult

STOP PRESS

£49.95 • Database Software • 0625 878888

An excellent DTP package, very strong on graphics, very well designed, and once you get used to it, easy to use. Sophisticated text handling features such as autowrap, but can't edit text - that all has to be done in your word processor before flowing the text in. A lot of good fonts supplied too.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Excellent graphics facilities, good as any graphics program
- ▲ Wide range of text styles with text autowrap
- ▲ Menu and key commands system suits beginner and expert
- ▼ No text editing ability

THE DESKTOP PUBLISHER

£29.95 • Database Software • 0625 878888

Tremendous value for money. Graphics and text boxes can be easily moved around and page layout is clear. You can edit text from within the program, using LocoScript-like commands to set bold and italics. Good range of fonts and graphics too, at half price of its rivals. Mouse optional for £50 more.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Text editor allows you to edit articles to fit the space easily
- ▲ Boxes and general layout easy to manipulate
- ▲ Works with three mice, but fine with keyboard alone
- ▲ Half the price of other packages
- ▲ Good range of fonts and graphics, and can design your own
- ▼ Can't fix size of text boxes - they expand to take all the text
- ▼ Headlines can look a bit jagged

LATE EXTRA

£19.50 • Exemplar Designs • PO Box 683, Bath, BA1 1XU

A Stop Press add-on consisting of a collection of 11 fonts that cover the range of type styles and sizes needed to create a balanced page. Also supplied on disc is a 13-page publication which describes how to create your own professionally-produced publication. Now you can create a good-looking page with readable text.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Good range of 11 complementary fonts
- ▲ Can adapt template for own use
- ▼ Time-consuming
- ▼ Text needs reducing for best results

MICRODESIGN II

£59.95 • Creative Technology • 0889 567160

The ultimate DTP package for sheet printed quality. Creative Technology regard the words and the graphics as being equally important, hence the program's 'integrated page processor' label. Runs on all three machines and produces very high quality results.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Has full 24-pin printer compatibility
- ▲ Easy and fun to use
- ▲ Excellent text-editing facilities
- ▲ Fully compatible with other word processor and DTP packages
- ▼ Won't run with Flipper

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Amstrad LQ3500.....£209
Amstrad LQ5000.....£295

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Orator 10 Prestige Elite 12
Mint Gothic 15 £5.80 each

BOOKS

Hackers Handbook III.....£6.95
Looking into LocoScript 2.....£14.95
15 Hour Word Processing.....£5.95
All In One: Mini Office Pro!.....£11.95
Program Your PCW.....£8.50
DTP with AMS.PCW.....£9.95
Mallard Basic, Intro.....£9.95
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Protex, A PCW User Guide.....£9.95
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Locospell + Locoscript II£27.00
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32 Names store.
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3. Magazine Binders

A superb gold-embossed green binder. Buy one and watch your collection grow into the definitive library of PCW information.

4. PCW Luggage

An essential addition for any PCW owners who want to ensure against accidental knocks when transporting their computer.

Ideal for writers on assignment, businessmen when taking the micro to the office, or salesmen for demonstrations.

High density foam padding and a water resistant nylon exterior make this a strong and safe piece of luggage, along with its adjustable shoulder strap and sturdy carry handles.

8256/8512

Two separated pouches for the printer and keyboard, that then fit neatly into the large case but leave room for manuals, etc.

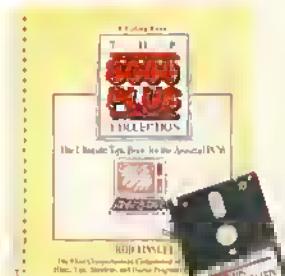
9512

Two large cases for the monitor and printer, with a separated pouch for the keyboard that fits in neatly with the printer but leaves room for manuals, etc.

8000 PLUS COLLECTION

(The Ultimate Tips Book for the Amstrad PCW)

The book is based on the collected tips from 8000 Plus from issue 1 to the present day and covers every possible facet of PCW use. But it's not just a reprint - every item has been rewritten, re-illustrated and updated where necessary. Plus a whole host of new tips have been added to make this book the essential guide to PCW use.



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from Database Software (8256/8512)
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Master Paint: with this package you have everything you need to produce quality, artistic, professional artwork. Create various shapes that can be filled with a choice of 16 different patterns, choose from a range of styles and fonts, use the airbrush for a more subtle shading facility.



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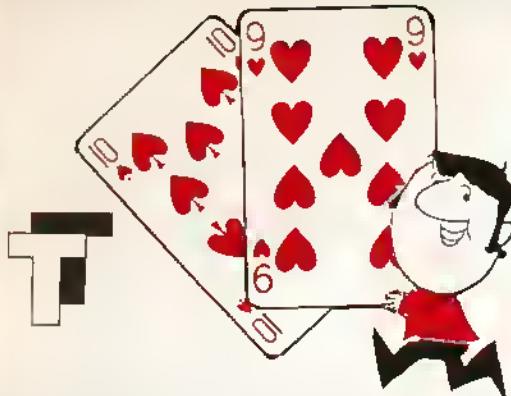
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CREATIVE TECHNOLOGY

POST SCRIPT

Have you got any praises to sing or axes to grind?

These are the pages in which you can air your views about PCWs – and virtually anything else for that matter – with an ardently expectant nation of readers. So what are we talking about this month? You'd be surprised: spaying bitches, musical raps, and John Major, Chancellor of the Exchequer, to name but a few. So send your views to Postscript, Beauford Court, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2XF.

Prize bitches

The April edition Postscript carried too many encomia to allow you to go on in that vein. Herewith some cold water to cool you all down: PCWs are all about communicating, yet you seem hellbent upon making all as clear as mud. Taking the issue as an example, I'll make random selections to illustrate my gripe. Pages 10, 11 and 12: the margin has infill of various assorted browns, greys and tans, comprised of partial illustrations overlaying one another (ie, a clutter of visual nothings.) If you wish to use such illustrations, then leave out the marginalia. Print running through varying shades of colourings tends to be somewhere between barely legible and illegible. You are

using what has hitherto been known as the art of camouflage to give me as much difficulty as possible in deciphering your text. Pages 26 and 27: the marginal decor has clusters of dark-green leaves obscuring the text. Tutor's comment would be 'Can do better' ... Page 29: the background infill of tickets on page-head seems to have migrated without reason from the article on ticket production (pages 20 and 21) having no relevance to Only the Lonely. Page 35: marginalia of light blue on pale blue; the exhibited desire to show off the extensive repertoire of the print outfit seems positively childish and certainly does nothing for communication ... Page 46: take this page to your optician and ask him if he would expect one of average vision ability to experience difficulty. My specs are of recent prescription but I still have recourse each month to using a magnifying glass to assist me when reading your mag; your use of glazed paper just doesn't fit in with such playing about with coloured background and jockeying so frequently from one size script to another ...

That's halfway through your mag but it should be enough to give my message – so may I now change tack? ...

Why, in every issue (I've been reading for the past 4 to 5 months) is it necessary that you have to print corrections/errata alongside all your latest crop of printers' pies? Perhaps if your compositors worked on the same material in the same month as your printers, we might have an easily digested product. No, I'm not a pro' in the

printing world (and I've yet to buy my PCW) but I am a lifelong reader and I declare your monthly output atrocious. Please find my cheque for your 14 issues offer, at the end of which may I hope some of my bitches will have been spayed. PS: If the above is too long for your Postscript pages, could you print it out as a feature headlined perhaps 'Room for improvement – comments, notes' and thereby prove yourselves not only sadists but masochists as well?

Douglas M Henly
Birchgrove
Cardiff

8000 PLUS: Well, Mr Henly, rarely do our readers take the time out that you obviously have to pen such letters of unrelieved support and appreciation. I was surprised to learn that you are not a pro in the printing world, since your own communication seems a very model of clarity and concision (as our readers will no doubt be able to see from the printed pages below.) I am, however, sorry to hear of the trouble you're having deciphering our margin notes and screen shots; I doubt that it will be of any consolation to you to hear that none of our readers – some of whom, I suspect, are many years your senior – have until now ever complained about them or our 'visual nothings'. As for that final accolade – the cheque that you enclosed – I'm afraid that we couldn't find it anywhere. Maybe you forgot to include it. I guess the bitches – like those of some of our readers – will just have to run their course.

April fools (1)

Not being someone who normally uses the listings in your magazine, it took me half a day to type in and de-bug Newchar.bas from your current edition.

Meeting a problem, I telephoned Locomotive and discovered that the listing was published as an April Fool's joke and is otherwise absolutely useless.

To anticipate a glib riposte, yes, I do have a sense of humour, but a joke that wastes God knows how much of your readers' time is just irresponsible.

By all means, have an April Fool's joke, as most newspapers do – which only takes a few minutes to read, but I am sure that most of your readers took quite a time to get the joke of Newchar.bas.

Mike Maber
Dorset

April fools (2)

I hurried home with my April copy of 8000 Plus to type in Richard

Clayton's Newchar.bas and the upgraded Check 3 program. Everything worked well and my 9512 screen is now filled by thin italic letters. There is, however, a slight problem. My editing speed has seriously declined since I find it a trifle difficult to read the screen through a mirror whilst standing on my head. As they would say in the country of my infant nurture, 'Alls down upwards and backwards road on.' If this is your idea of an April Fool Tut! Tut! Tut! Well really!

I was the first to call Mr Peters of Oxford about his back copies of the magazine (see April's Postscript *All Present and Correct*), but unfortunately I ended up at the end of the queue and only succeeded in filling three gaps in my collection. It wasn't his fault. The poor chap was inundated by calls. However, I now have a spare copy of issue number 7 of April 1987 and is there anybody out there with good spare copies of numbers 6, 12, 15 and 16 for March, September and December 1987 and January 1988 respectively. If so, please call me on Nottingham 0602 258848.

Even though spelling has never been your strong point, it is still a superb magazine. May the force ever be with you.

Derrick Bullock
Beeston
Nottingham

8000 PLUS: Glib ripostes, us? Oh no, we're too busy trying to spell things correctly. Seriously though, I'm sorry that several of our readers took offence at what we – and Locomotive – considered to be a fairly harmless April Fool's listings prank. We were only trying to have a little fun – honest!

This is the BBC

I wonder if you can help me. I am trying to locate a program, preferably in the Public Domain, which can convert data files between the CP/M Plus operating system (as used in the Amstrad PCW 8000 series) and the BBC series of microcomputers? (The only one I know about is Multiformat from Moonstone Computing.)

There are two other points I should like to ask about. Was the recent letter 'A ghost in the machine' from K Cox of Berkhamstead a genuine letter or an April Fool? If the latter, I think it irresponsible to frighten PCW users with the idea of a non-existent virus. If it is true, however, I think you should have devoted space elsewhere in the magazine to this, and also warn readers

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14 MAJOR RELEASES FULL DETAILS ON PAGE 58

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about the source (in the UK) of this software; the reply to the letter mentions Mr JD Haldeman and Ms P Erlichmeine of San Fernando; is it just a coincidence that two of the Watergate conspirators were Bob Haldeman and John Ehrlichmann? Despite the above, I do genuinely enjoy 8000 Plus greatly (and I know everyone says that), and only wish it came out more often.

Ian Rippey
County Armagh
Northern Ireland

8000 PLUS: We've just spoken to the Public Domain Software Library (Winscombe House, Beacon Road, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 1JL - 0892 663298) and they recommend that you attach a serial port to the back of your PCW, so that, by means of a serial cable between the two machines and an appropriate comms package running on both (it must be capable of Kermit protocol) the relevant data can be transferred. Mucking around with the disc formats is likely to prove a real headache. As far as A ghost in the machine is concerned, the advantage of a machine like the PCW is that it remains blissfully immune to all the most heinous viruses of which the computer industry can conceive. It is precisely because they can rest at ease in this knowledge, that we thought our readers would be able to appreciate last month's Postscript spool.

Anyway, thanks for the support.

Catching code

Browsing through my At Last database the other day, it occurred to me that come May 6th, I am going to have to change the codes on all the London telephone numbers.

It set me wondering whether anyone on your excellent magazine had any plans to market a disc with a Find and Exchange type of facility to save us all having to key in hundreds of changes.

It would sell like hot cross buns! Best wishes for your continuing success.

Ian Macpherson
London

8000 PLUS: Well wonder no further, Mr Macpherson. Always at the forefront of modern communications, us, we've included a listing on page 59 - May 6. Bas - which will allow you to convert all London-bound ASCII datafiles.

Running for cover

I expect there is no-one who reads your magazine who knows less about computers than I do, having bought a PCW 9512 less than a week ago. But I do know

where to get a set of dust covers which includes one for the printer when it has the sheet feeder on. You need to remove the paper rest, which stands proud of the rest of the feeder, to get a good fit. The set can be obtained from Computerware, telephone Exeter 0392 210507. Mr Roger Hall, whose plea for this information was in Postscript in April, can now finish the washing up!

George Meredith
Exeter

8000 PLUS: Thanks for your letter, George. We know of another company producing dustcovers for the 9512 with cut sheet feeder in situ: Hamilton Business Systems, 38 Green Lane, Hounslow, London TW4 6JF. They're on 01 577 0098. For further information, have a read of their advert on page 38.

SODDing off

I now refer to my start-of-day disc as a SODD.

Can one claim copyright when inventing computer jargon?

Leslie Griffiths
Ashstead
Surrey

8000 PLUS: We may have got there before you, although I'm afraid that's one of the more polite things our office start-ups get called.

Invisible review?

In the Postscript section of the October 1989, issue 37, edition of 8000 Plus, in response to a request for a database best-suited to recording information about photographs, you said next month, which it is reasonable to assume is the November edition, you would be reviewing such a specialist database, Fotocall.

Having now obtained a copy of that issue, I cannot find the promised review.

Incidentally, you also suggested that Locofile would be suitable. However, in the March edition, you headline an article on Masterfile with "the best PCW database on the market". Where do we go from here in choosing a database?

Dr Kays
Bristol

8000 PLUS: The problem with Fotocall was that it struck us as being too incomplete a program on which to base a constructive review. That being the case, we decided to hold it over until such times as its creators could tie up its loose ends. As soon as it looks fit for inspection, we'll tell you all about it.

Having said that, it's doubtful that any specialist photographers' database will be

able to do the job any more efficiently than Locomotive's Locofile. It offers you the scope to produce some quite tightly-defined and structured record patterns with good indexing and search facilities. For more details, read our Locofile tutorial series (issues 30 to 34) or write to Locomotive Software (0306 740606), Dorking Business Park, Dorking, Surrey RH14 17L.

level. Personally, I prefer programming in both Cobol and 8080 machine code.

Getting back to Mr Ravenscroft, I would suggest an integrated package, something like Mini Office Professional would be a life-saver. I use spreadsheets to design forms, databases to keep records of students, word processing for designing handouts and the graphics for my own pleasure.

Knowing the hard work behind teaching, I believe we also need a hobby or pastime to give us a break. My pastime is punching the keyboard at all times. I'm new to my Amstrad PCW 9512, but if I can put it to use to help a colleague, I can't wait.

I'm also new to 8000 Plus; I promise to subscribe at the end of April.

John Reeves
Computer training officer
Castle Vale, Birmingham

8000 PLUS: Thanks for getting in touch.

Breakdown service

"What happens when your PCW breaks down?" you write (page 8, April issue of 8000 Plus). The item then goes on to discuss how you pay for the repairs to be carried out by an organisation called Restart.

When my PCW broke down some months ago, I contacted the suppliers, Wildings, who I understand to be a reputable organisation. 'Certainly,' they said. 'The repair will take about five weeks.' The response from Amstrad was, in due course, 'Take it to Dictaphone.'

Long before this, I had contacted Suredata, who advertise in 8000 Plus. They said 'Bring it in straight away and let us have a look at it.' So I did and in as many hours as had been promised weeks by Wildings and Dictaphone, it was up and talking to me again.

When, a few months later, there was another, quite different, breakdown (my 9512 has a very hard life in the service of a busy Parish Council), Suredata really showed their competence. The 'trunion lever widget', or whatever, was broken. 'No spares available at present and no firm promise of delivery' said Amstrad. But Suredata repaired the broken widget and the printer has been hammering away for several weeks. (My wife was less pleased than I was.)

What we PCW users need are lots of Suredatas. Need I say that I know nothing of the



Major coup



I thought you might be interested in the front cover of this week's 'Economist'; yes, you are right, as you can see from the picture the Chancellor of the Exchequer is using our own dearly beloved Amstrad 9512. No doubt this will comfort us all as we pay off the loans on our PCW purchases at extortionate rates of interest.

I wonder if he has ever run Yes Chancellor through it? You never know, it might improve matters: it's a nice thought than the alternative of John Major putting the whole of the British economy on a SuperCalc spreadsheet... I wonder if he's mastered command files yet? Congratulations on a great mag.

Jonathan Hutchinson
Stretford
Manchester

8000 PLUS: How could we fail to be aware of it? Our phone lines were jammed and our post bags bulging following the appearance of this one on the newsagents' stands. Whoever would have thought that the PCW could ever be an instrument of torture. Thanks for your letter, though, Jonathan.

Teacher's pet

In issue 43, April 1990, page 88, I was glad to see John Ravenscroft's Calling all teachers letter. As a teacher myself, I would very much like to get in touch and answer any of his problems.

I teach, wait for it, COBOL programming, word processing, database methods and spreadsheet methods up to City and Guilds Elementary

POSTSCRIPT

company other than as a satisfied customer? I may mention also that I have been saving money for this Parish (goodness knows why) by the use of a firm called Aladdin who replace the ribbons in my printer cassettes at about half the price of new cassettes. This is another advertiser in 8000 Plus whose service I have found to be very satisfactory.

May I add that most satisfactory of all is 8000 Plus? Goodness knows how one would manage without it?

FJ Pidgeon
High Wycombe
Bucks

8000 PLUS: Thanks for taking the trouble to register your support – both for the magazine and its advertisers. It's always good to hear from people who are happy with the service we – and they – offer.

Finding the drive

I will apologise now for what will seem to you another tedious letter asking lots of questions; I've tried asking at my local shop, but they are either too busy or try to sell me another system.

I am in the process of starting a commercial illustration business, and I have acquired a PCW 8256 on which I would like to run the following software: LocoScript 2 and LocoSpell, LocoFile and LocoMail and Stop Press and mouse.

I have a very basic knowledge of computers so I would be extremely grateful if you could help me on the following points: 1) I plan to upgrade the memory and fit an external 3.5 or 5.25 inch second drive for storage purposes. Would I also need a second FD4 drive to run and use the above software to its full capabilities? 2) Could you recommend a cheap second drive and would it be best to use 3.25 or 5.25 inch discs? 3) What do you consider better for my book-keeping: Cashmaster or Money Manager? 4) And finally, could you recommend a good invoicing package to run on my system?

Chris Cowell
Gonerby
Swansea

8000 PLUS: No, you won't need another FD4 drive because you will be able to convert the software for use on the other drives. We would probably recommend buying a 3.5 inch disc drive from Compact Micros (0274 640589 at 177 Sunnyside Lane, Otley Road, Bradford BD3 0JB). They cost £79.95. As for the accounts programs, Money Manager will probably give you a better run for your money because of its graph-printing option. For

your invoicing requirements, try The Invoicer from Corrix (0234 219969) for £59.95 or Sage Accounts Plus (that's stock and invoicing) from Sagesoft (091 2131555) for £61.

BASIC designs

The name of your magazine was given to me as the most likely source of information for Amstrad computer/word processors. I wonder if you could help me with a problem concerning the existence of software for the PCW 8256.

I have for a long time been looking for a version of BASIC for the PCW 8256 which has a graphics facility, in much the same way as, say, the BBC or the Spectrum. It seems odd that none seems to be available; certainly the BASIC provided with the machine has no graphics at all.

I would be most grateful if you could help me with this matter.

Hugh Livesey
Somerset

8000 PLUS: You need CP Software's Lightning BASIC (£19.95), an ingenious add-on to normal Mailard which allows you to produce graphics and on-screen special effects without any machine code programming. CP's telephone number is 0993 823463 and they can be reached at Stonefield, 198 The Hill, Burford, Oxfordshire OX8 4HX.

Sticking keys

I have a four-year old 8256 which has done trojan service, used mainly for word processing. I'm an arthritic geriatric, and one-time speed typist. Grandchildren stood in awe when Granny typed their school projects, and I was able to type comfortably for long periods.

But over the last few months, I have had some difficulty in getting up my typing speed with any accuracy. The keyboard has become stiff, and misses quite a few letters at ordinary pressure; I find myself going back to the beginning of my work to insert vowels and other letters which didn't come out first time.

A kind local electrical engineer unscrewed the base of the keyboard and removed an incredible amount of dust and fluff – thanks to your Tipoff in page 68 of January '89.

But it hasn't given any more fluidity to the keyboard, and I can't find any other reference in the 8000 magazines to this hiccup – and I have them all, from 1986 to date.

Can you please help? Must I buy another keyboard? I can't manipulate little screwdrivers,

hands are too stiff, so I need precise instructions for my kind friend to follow – he's so impressed that I think he's going to buy a PCW anyway. So we are doubly interested in your recommendations.

Mrs DM Williamson
Polegate
East Sussex

8000 PLUS: It rather sounds as if the little springs under each key have gone – in which case, you won't be able to fix it yourself unless you really know what you're doing. The good news is that you won't need to buy a new keyboard; the bad news, on the other hand, is that keyboard repairs tend to be rather expensive with each new key costing somewhere in the region of £2.50 to £3.

Success story

Thank you for lowering the barriers and injecting some humour into a subject that most people take far too seriously. Until I bought your magazine, I was beset by worries and doubts, but every time I read the Postscript and Tipoffs pages, I can actually find things that I understand – not so with some of the other PCW magazines.

I've had my 8256 for a year and a half now. I taught myself how to use it, and as I became more adventurous, I also became aware that my M drive just wasn't big enough.

It started with little things – like the longing to use the big dictionary in LocoSpell, then the desire to be able to store more than a couple of fonts at a time. The crunch came though, when I decided that Micro Design II was to be my next conquest. My husband bought me a 256K Memory Upgrade kit from Silicon City and we spent Boxing Day reading the instructions and eventually plucked up the courage to do the dirty deed. We took my beloved PCW apart and with very little effort, found the bits that the instructions talked about.

It worked!! A huge – well, huge to me, anyway – M drive and Micro Design II on the way. I've been using the PCW constantly since then and experienced no problems – yet. The upgrade cost about £30 and took an hour to accomplish. I would recommend this method of upgrading to anyone capable of wielding a screwdriver.

There is life after an upgrade; be brave and be bold ...

Mrs Ceri Brabham
Southampton

8000 PLUS: Thanks for sharing the news

of your triumph with us, Mrs Brabham. May it be an inspiration to others.

Raw deal

I would like to bring to the attention of your readers what, I think, amounts to a real rip-off for PCW owners of dBase II.

I have recently become interested in dBase II and, after having purchased the program, was looking around for books on the subject. I was delighted to find one in the local W H Smith shop. The book is called 'Working with dBase II' and is written by M de Pace.

Imagine my surprise when, on reading it, it sounded very familiar. On checking my dBase II user manual, it turned out that this book is nothing but a photocopy of the manual.

The reason I think it is a rip-off is because if you go out and buy dBase II, YOU DON'T NEED THIS BOOK because you have the manual.

Likewise, if you don't have dBase II YOU DON'T NEED THIS BOOK.

Nowhere in the book, does M de Pace have the decency to mention that you are buying a duplicate. At £9.95, it is an expensive duplicate.

I know quite a few people who, like me, have recently become interested in dBase II. I shall certainly make sure that they are made aware of the above and will advise them to leave it where it belongs – on the bookshop shelf.

Derek Chatterton
Stevenage
Herts

8000 PLUS: Thanks for that word of warning; I hope your letter is in time to stop somebody else from making the same mistake.

One at a time, please

Why are you so nasty to your competition entrants? In order to avoid multiple entries, surely the best way would be to require that some token accompany the entry. A £1 coin attached to entries might discourage multiples and swell the editorial coffers. After all, even the recent water privatisation attracted multiple applications.

Edward Heron
Morden Surrey

8000 PLUS: No, but seriously, folks, this multiple entry lark is getting a bit ridiculous. One gentleman – who shall remain nameless – submitted about seventeen last month.

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COMPETITION

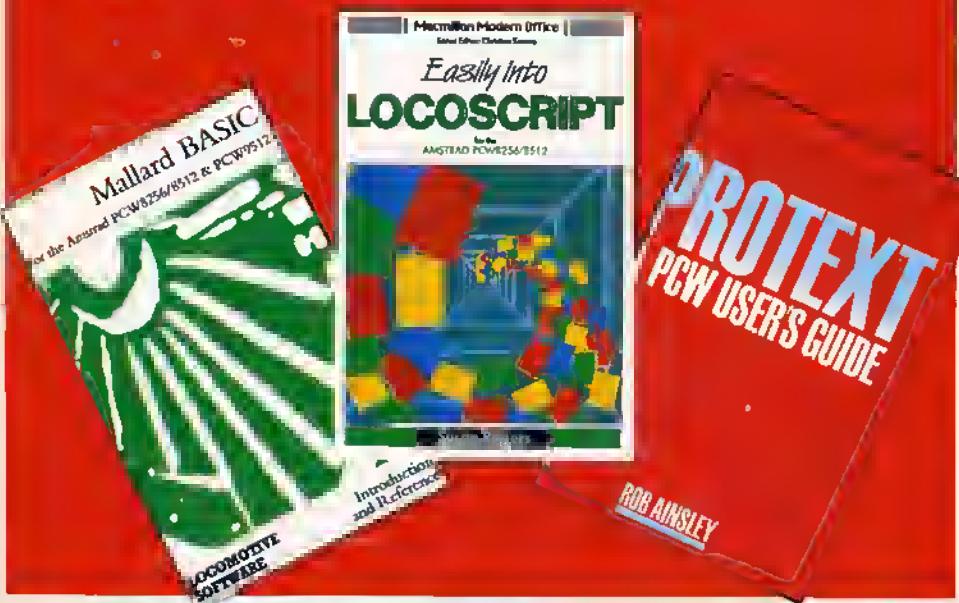
Get yourself quickly through the PCW learning curve by winning this month's competition

Our back page competition this month is all about winning yourself a solid, well-rounded PCW education. To each of the three lucky winners we are offering a pack of three trusty tomes, each one of which has, at some stage in the past, received rave reviews from us.

Easily into LocoScript by Susan Rogers. Locomotive Software's *Mallard BASIC – Introduction and Reference* and, finally, *Protext – A PCW User's Guide* by erstwhile Editor of

8000 Plus, Rob Ainsley, represent about £40-worth of pure erudition that could be yours – for nothing – if your name is drawn out of the hat next month. So what do you have to do exactly? Simply jot down the answers to the following questions on the back of a postcard by working out who really said what and send it in to us here at the 8000 Plus Book Competition, Beauford Court, Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2AP. Entries must be received no later than 31st May 1990.

1. 'The greatest misfortune that ever befell man was the invention of printing.
Printing has destroyed education ...'
- (A) William Caxton (B) Benjamin Disraeli (C) John McGregor
2. 'Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body'
- (A) Dr Miriam Stoppard (B) Mike Tyson (C) Sir Richard Steele
3. 'Soap and education are not as sudden as a massacre, but they are more deadly in the long run'
- (A) Mark Twain (B) Jonathan Swift (C) Larry Hagman
4. 'My argument is that War makes rattling good history; but Peace is poor reading'
- (A) Winston Churchill (B) Leo Tolstoy (C) Thomas Hardy
5. 'Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man'
- (A) Sir Thomas More (B) Francis Bacon (C) Jeffrey Archer



FISH WINNERS

Our congratulations go to Mr M Hemming from Studley, Warwickshire, Jill Keat from Gwynedd and R Dowling from St Austell in Cornwall who correctly completed our March word circle to get TEMPLATE. A copy of the game FISH will be winging its way to each of them.

Next month

The freelance life

Three writers, of very different types and at differing stages in their respective careers, will be telling us about the agony and the ecstasy of the freelance life. If you're considering taking that most drastic of journalistic plunges, stay tuned to the June issue to read more about those who have.

The 9512 spreads its wings

So far, the 8000s have been claiming most of our attention when it comes to adding new drives to your PCW. But what about the 9512? With our definitive, fully-illustrated, 9512 handbook, we will be showing you everything you will ever need to know about transforming your 9512 into an altogether more versatile – and more powerful – machine.

Mini Office to the rescue

This month we've learnt how to monitor and manage power expenditure in the home; next month – again with the help of Mini Office Professional – we will be looking at ways in which you can manage your assets and liabilities on a monthly basis.

Jockeying for position

With a number of very important meets still to come in this year's horse-racing calendar, we'll be piecing together a full round-up of all those PCW programs that claim to be able to minimise that potentially fatal element of hazard before you place your bets. A waste of money or a betting boon? We find out.

Calling all estate agents

Just when you thought existing vertical software had passed you by, Intrasel Ltd have brought out The Estate Agent. Written to the specifications of a local estate agent, its application, say its creators, is a realistic one.

In next month's issue, we will be reviewing the program which provides you, among other things, with a database on which to store the details of both properties and prospective house-buyers.

8000 PLUS

The June issue of 8000 Plus will be sitting on your newsagents' shelves from May 24th. Don't forget to order your copy next time you go in

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By popular demand the PCW section has been expanded, and includes the complete *Loco* selection from *File* to *Font*.

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There are 64 pages describing a complete range of IBM PC (and compatible) software, plus an expanded section covering the best of the PCW software.

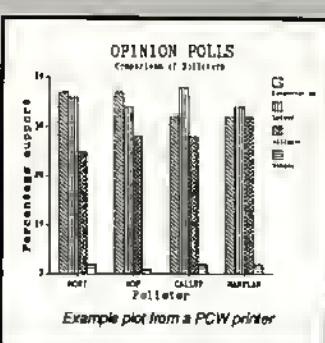
Accounts, wordprocessing, database and graphics are all covered.

Check and see if your local software stockist has the *New Star* catalogue available - and if not, ask them to get some in, but don't delay before getting your free copy!

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